

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES OF HUNGARY:
IS A TRANSFORMATION NECESSARY?

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ABSTRACT

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES OF HUNGARY: IS A TRANSFORMATION NECESSARY? by MAJ Szabolcs Pecsvarady, 119 pages.

Officially, Hungary started to develop its special operations capability in 2005. The Hungarian Defense Forces, however, already had units which were special operations capable, while the newly formed “34th Special Operations Battalion” does not have a comprehensive special operations capability. The units belong to various chains of command, their efforts and training are not coordinated sufficiently. Unclear or misunderstood definitions of “special operations,” “special forces” and “special operations forces” carry the risk of misusing the existing capabilities, and may seriously hinder the effective future establishment effort. The research shows the current state of the existing special operations capable units of the Hungarian Defense Forces. The primary question which the thesis tries to answer is, whether Hungary should invest more in the (ongoing) establishment process, to obtain more effective and comprehensive special operations forces. For this, the author examines the identified (possible) tasks of Hungarian SOF, and compares the existing units and capabilities to the United States Army Special Operations Forces. Based on this comparison, the author tries to reveal possible capability gaps, and in the last two chapters provides solutions and recommendations for future development of Hungarian Special Operations Forces.

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ACRONYMS

ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
HDF	Hungarian Defense Forces
HUN	Hungary
HUNSOF	Hungarian Special Operations Forces
JFC	Joint Forces Command
SF	Special Forces
SO	Special Operations
SOC	Special Operations Capable
SOF	Special Operations Forces
USASOF	United States Army Special Operations Forces

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2005 the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Hungary issued Order 22, which is the Founding Order of the 34th Bercsényi László Special Operations Battalion. Many responsible political and military decision makers--and the majority of the public--think that Hungary officially established the special operations capability of the Hungarian Defense Forces (HDF). This is not exactly true however.

First, the designation of the 34th battalion is inaccurate. Its tasks and structure designate it as an equivalent of a US Army Special Operation Forces (ARSOF) Special Forces Battalion. This means, that the 34th battalion owns the most important segment of special operations tasks, but is definitely not able to cover the whole possible spectrum of special operations.¹

Second, back in 1993, the Minister of Defense established another organization, the 88th Air Mobile Battalion. According to its Founding Order, the unit has to be ready to conduct special operations, which other conventional military forces may not be able to conduct. The unit has similar tasks and structure to the US Army 75th Ranger Regiment. In reality, today it represents probably the least understood capability within the HDF.

Third, the definition of “Special Operations Forces” (SOF)² is misunderstood even by a large group of responsible decision-makers: necessary supporting elements, and key “enablers” like comprehensive doctrines and manuals, consistent selection, and

¹For the definition of Special Operations see Glossary.

²For the definition of Special Operations Forces see Glossary.

additional licenses are still missing. Without these, the employment of special operations capabilities and forces is not really effective.

The acquisition of new capabilities happens within the framework of a greater, comprehensive transformation process of the HDF, which started almost twenty years ago. The establishment of special operations capability is just one aspect of this transformation, but definitely an important one. Surely, it is not easy to create something that has no extensive, traditional past in the HDF. This may give an excuse for the current deficiencies, but it definitely does not give a waiver to correct a not fully functioning system or organization.

The primary question this research tries to answer is whether Hungary should put more effort into the development of the HDF's special operations forces. For this, the author examines the current issues regarding the--as an entity so far non-existing--Hungarian Special Operations Forces (HUNSOF), and shows evidences of the above mentioned statements. It will compare the existing Hungarian units, organizations, and their anticipated missions to that of ARSOF. Assuming that ARSOF has effective and comprehensive special operations forces and capabilities, any significant and unjustifiable difference between the existing Hungarian and American organizations will show a capability gap, which the HDF should eliminate through some reform or reorganization. Based on these identified capability gaps, the second part of the paper will show a possible method of the future transformation of HUNSOF. If (without detailed financial calculations) the proposed transformation is acceptable within the limits of available resources of the HDF, the paper will be able to answer the above mentioned

primary question. To begin, because of its distinctiveness from the US Army, the paper starts with the introduction of the HDF and its recent transformation.

The Hungarian Army from the 1980s

Many Eastern-European countries had to change their militaries significantly during the 1990s. First, because of the political changes arising from the collapse of the Soviet Union. This caused a huge change in their armies' structure and in respective doctrines. A visible result was the decrease in the strength of the armed forces. This was not only because of the disappearance of the former Cold War Western Threat, but because of the decreased budget, which the small, now politically and militarily independent countries had to face.

The Hungarian Army (Hungarian Defense Forces-HDF) started its transformation in the late 1980s, and decreased its strength from 100,000 to about 24,000. Parallel to this, HDF started to develop new capabilities. Needless to say, these two procedures interfered with each other.

Special operations forces--by the definition used in this paper--did not exist in Hungary during the Cold War. James D. Kiras introduced the category of the "specially designated unit," which is probably the most appropriate definition in the case of Hungary. According to his definition, "specially designated units" are conventional units which should have conducted missions similar to the missions of dedicated special operations forces.³ Prior to 1990, the Hungarian Army was preparing to fight a regular,

³James D. Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.

large scale conflict in Europe, which means the emphasis was on the fight of large, mechanized formations. Because of the skills and the number of the existing Spetsnaz units of the Soviet Union, establishing similar units and developing those capabilities in the satellite countries was obviously unnecessary.

During the Cold War there were no special (operation) forces within the Hungarian army. The only units which had tasks somewhat similar to the ARSOF units direct action tasks were the reconnaissance battalions. There were two distinct types of reconnaissance units. The first one was the so called “troop recon” which were basically scout units. They were equipped with APCs, IFVs, and were responsible for the reconnaissance support of their parent brigades. Because of their mechanized nature, their ability to conduct dismounted operations was not crucial.

The second type of reconnaissance unit was the long range reconnaissance units. They were airborne trained, and their role was to conduct reconnaissance in depth, behind enemy lines, using small teams. They were able to conduct small scale sabotage missions, primarily against key military installations. The battalions were under the command of the Reconnaissance Department of the army. The airborne and air assault missions would have been carried out by specific Soviet Red Army units; however, occasionally the regular infantry battalions of the Hungarian army practiced the latter.

To fill the gap, which came into being with the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, HDF established an air assault battalion in 1993. Its mission was primarily to conduct air assault and other operations which may not be carried out by conventional forces. The unit’s structure and training resembled that of the 75th Ranger Regiment’s organization.

Five other independent units existed with “special”⁴ skills and with the inherited tasks of the former Warsaw Pact era long range reconnaissance battalions (with the primary tasks of long range reconnaissance and sabotage behind enemy lines).

The second half of the 1990s brought new tasks and missions for the HDF. Hungary’s involvement in international peace support operations increased, especially after 1999, when Hungary became a NATO member. The predecessors of the three, currently special operations capable units were tasked with several deployments. The 88th was heavily involved in SFOR (Stabilization Force) in the Balkans, parts of the 24th Bornemissza Gergely Reconnaissance Battalion (24th BGRB) deployed to Iraq, as well as a company from the 88th battalion. In 2004 the 34th sent a company to Afghanistan, and later all three battalions took multiple tours either in Kabul or later in the Hungarian PRT in Baghlan province.

The next major transformation of the HDF’s structure occurred in 2004. The 88th battalion became a subordinate of the 25th Klapka György Infantry Brigade. The battalion received two more specified tasks. Next to its original tasks, it had to designate a company as a “Force Protection Company” and another as a “Military Police Company.” Today, the battalion has to develop and maintain “force protection skills” and “limited military police” skills and on order deploy these companies in such roles. The 24th battalion became a subordinate of the 5th Bocskai István Infantry Brigade, but

⁴Compared to the rest of the Hungarian army, the units were “special,” because they were airborne, regularly conducted advanced demolition training, survival training, ski training, mountaineering, and scuba training. They put more emphasis on small unit tactics (squad, platoon) and tasks like raids, ambushes and long range reconnaissance. The physical and medical requirements of the soldiers were higher than the average of the army.

maintained its primary tasks as reconnaissance battalion. The obvious difference in the battalions' structure, equipment, and capabilities from their new parent brigades made this transition and the cooperation quite difficult.

The winner of this change was the 34th battalion. The unit transformed and received its new designation as 34th Bercsényi László Special Operation Battalion in 2005.

The Organization of the Hungarian Defense Forces Today

Since the organization of the HDF is available on the official website of the Hungarian Ministry of Defense,⁵ just a short introduction focusing primarily on the combat subunits is enough to familiarize the reader with the present structure of the HDF. Since January 2007, the HDF established the Joint Forces Command (JFC). HDF JFC is a medium level command and control military organization with an independent table of organization and a legal status of higher operational unit. The JFC's supervisory body is the Ministry of Defense. HDF JFC operates under the direct service subordination of the Chief of Defense Staff.

The combat units of the HDF are the following:

1. 5th "Bocskai István" Infantry Brigade. One subordinate battalion of the brigade is the 5/24th BGRB.
2. 25th "Klapka György" Infantry Brigade.

⁵Hungarian Ministry of Defense, Magyar Honvédség Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság [The Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces], <http://www.hm.gov.hu/rovat/7/hungarian-defence-forces> (accessed 22 November 2010).

Both infantry brigades have BTR 80/ and 80/A armored personnel carriers, hence their designation may be “medium” infantry. The 25th brigade has the “Combat Support Battalion,” which fields the sole artillery and armor companies of the HDF.

3. 25/88 Light Mixed Battalion, which is partly independent; however, it is under the direct service subordination of the 25th brigade. The unit is located in the city of Szolnok.
4. 34th “Bercsényi László” Special Operations Battalion, also located in the city of Szolnok.
5. 59th “Szentgyörgyi Dezső” Helicopter Base.
6. 12th “Arrabona” Air Defense Missile Regiment.
7. 86th “Szolnok” Helicopter Base, which is the base airfield of all helicopter assets of the HDF, located in the city of Szolnok.

Among many other the combat support units include the engineering and NBC battalions, signal and command and control support battalion. The Civilian–Military Cooperation and Psychological Operations Centre and the Peace Support Training Centre (which is related to the topic of the paper) also belong to the combat support units. The group of combat service support units includes the logistics regiment, combat training centre and a support brigade.

The New Threats and the National Military Strategy

Before focusing on the special operations forces as the main topic of the paper, it is necessary to reveal a general overview of recent visions or predictions regarding the

present and possible future of the warfare. After all, this is a strongly influencing factor in the employment of military forces, including SOF.

The literature of this analysis of contemporary warfare is quite large. It is enough if one just read military periodicals. For example a recent issue of the Joint Force Quarterly⁶ provides a comprehensive picture about the expected threats: “rogue” states (Iran), emerging superpowers (China), failing states, ethnic conflicts and humanitarian crises (various regions of Africa), problems of irregular warfare, global terrorism and the new battlefields (Cyberspace). A detailed analysis, but even a less detailed compilation may be the main topic of an essay itself.

Because the limits of this research prevents discussing emerging threats in total, and may stray from the main topic, a short introduction regarding the most widely accepted observations and predictions about the present and future threats will suffice. For two reasons, a short introduction to the National Military Strategy of the Republic of Hungary (NMS) is perhaps the easiest method to introduce these threats. First, upon reading international literature in its relation to the NMS, one may conclude that it adequately identifies and describes new threats. Second, it is the primary guidance about the possible employment and future development of the HDF.

The latest version of the *National Military Strategy (NMS)* came out in 2009.⁷ Regarding the security environment, the *NMS* clearly states that the probability of a

⁶*Joint Force Quarterly* 58 (Washington DC: National Defense University Press. 3rd quarter, July 2010.)

⁷Hungarian Ministry of Defense, *A Magyar Köztársaság Nemzeti Katonai Stratégiája* [National Military Strategy of the Republic of Hungary]. (Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó, 2009).

conventional armed conflict is low in the region in the foreseeable future, primarily because of the fact that both Hungary and the majority of her neighbors are members of NATO and the European Union. The *NMS* divides the emerging threats into global and regional. Under global threats it mentions terrorism, the possible escalation of local conflicts, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the conflicts emerging from overpopulation, resource scarcity, climatic change and increasing ideological extremism. Regarding regional threats, the primary concern is the still existing ethnic instability of the Balkans region.

Along with present risks, the *NMS* mentions the industrial and environmental disasters, sabotage against key infrastructure, unstable countries and the organized crime, which may trigger mass migration. Illegal trafficking of goods and the large quantities of illegal or uncontrolled arms and explosives in the countries of the region also represent risk. To counter these factors, the country may initiate the employment or cooperation of military force.

The defense policy of the Republic of Hungary considers two assets to execute necessary military actions. The first is the national military power, and the second one is the military cooperation with the other allied countries. The *NMS* emphasizes the importance of the country's membership in NATO and EU, and clearly states that the use of military force outside of the boundaries of Hungary is only possible in accordance with international mandate, and only within the frame of the alliance or a coalition.

Regarding the homeland defense, the HDF has to be ready to defend the territorial integrity of the country primarily together with the allied countries, but alone as well until the arrival of other allied forces. Parallel to this, the country fulfills its commitment to the

common defense framework of the NATO, and with designated assets actively participates in the international effort on the global war on terrorism.

Furthermore the HDF has to be ready to use military force abroad as part of an international force, outside of the geographical boundaries of NATO or EU. For this it has to prepare designated units for being employed in extreme environmental circumstances (weather and terrain), without the host nation support.

According to the *NMS*, in short, the HDF has to be prepared to answer the issues derived from:

1. The asymmetric aspect of the warfare: sub-state actors and opponents, irregular warfare and cross-border (international) insurgencies;
2. Wide range of military operations within the framework of multinational coalitions;
3. Complex crisis-management tasks and prolonged stability operations, together with civilian organizations;
4. The omnipresence of global media and the significant influence on the public opinion.⁸

In the second part of the *NMS* there is a list of necessary capabilities to develop and changes to make in order to be able to fulfill the mentioned tasks and missions of the HDF. The document states that Hungary does not intend to develop a full spectrum military capability because of the country's NATO membership. As primary areas of development, the *NMS* marks the importance of command and control systems, the

⁸National Military Strategy of the Republic of Hungary, 9

increased mobility and firepower of land forces, acquisition of new helicopters and development of strategic airlift capability. Additional consideration regarding the development of the HDF is the required interoperability, and the expeditionary aspect and short reaction time of the military force.

As a key factor, the NMS states that the guiding principle during the development of capabilities and structure should be based on the most likely operations, and the HDF has to prepare for mission accomplishment on the highest level. The HDF has to develop quick and effective decision making system which is a basic requirement of the new type of warfare. The deployed units have to be able to operate in extreme circumstances with a minimum of six months rotation period in case of land forces. Finally, the NMS declares that for a fully operational and effective force, it is necessary to employ an adequate promotion system, to ensure the constant availability of the required and trained manpower.

Existing Problems

Perhaps it is visible from the first part of the introduction that significant changes and transformations occurred in the HDF during the last two decades. Still, the reorganization was not successful from every aspect.

The various governments reduced the size of the HDF in the last twenty years. Regardless of the steady decrease in numbers of the personnel strength, the HDF's grade structure is somewhat distorted, if one considers a pyramid as a desirable shape representing the numbers in various grades: less high ranking officers on top, more enlisted in the base of the pyramid. In the end of 2008, there were 5,072 officers, 7,207

NCOs and 5,644 enlisted soldiers serving in the HDF, which means that 86 percent of the available positions were filled.⁹

A high proportion of the experienced senior officers and NCOs left the army between 2004 and 2008 which caused a big shortage in manpower and more importantly in source of applicable knowledge.¹⁰ The effect of this was more negative in the case of the NCO cadre, because the young generation had no example to follow, and many of the young sergeants achieved higher grades prematurely.

The political leadership realized that the establishment of a predictable career model is absolutely necessary.¹¹ However the adjustment of the salaries will be unavoidable in the near future, because even despite the unpredictability of the civilian job market, HDF will not be able to compete with the higher incomes of civilian jobs.¹²

Next to the organizational changes, the deployment per unit rate increased also. Hungary increased its participation in international military operations, which made the

⁹Hungarian Ministry of Defense, Tájékoztató az országgyűlési képviselők részére a honvédelmi politika 2008, évi megvalósításáról, a Magyar Honvédség felkészítéséről, állapotáról és fejlesztéséről szóló beszámolóról [Briefing for the Members of the National Assembly about the training, status and development of the Hungarian Defense Forces in 2008] (Budapest: Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Hungary, 2008).

¹⁰László Szűcs, Generációk hiányoznak a parancsnokság állományából,” [Interview with the Commander of the JFC]. *Honvedelem.hu*, 8 July 2009. www.honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/15679 (accessed 10 April 2010).

¹¹László Szűcs, “Debrecenben járt a minisztérium államtitkára” [Undersecretary of Defense visited Debrecen], *Honvedelem.hu*, 10 March 2010, www.honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/18814/vadai_agnes_debrecenben.html (accessed 10 April 2010)

¹²Szegő Péter, “A katonaságot vonzó értelmiségi pályává tenné Hende” [Introductionary hearing of the new Minister of Defense of Hungary], *Hvg.hu*, 27 May 2010, http://hvg.hu/itthon/20100527_hende_csaba_bizotsagi_meghallgatasa (accessed 5 September 2010).

changing of the training system necessary. However, the synchronization of the annual training cycle and the deployments is unsuccessful, and the battalions simply do not have the resources to conduct two different types of training simultaneously.

Because the deployment of individual soldiers has to be voluntary, a unit never deploys as a whole which makes unit level training nearly impossible. As an example, one may observe the accomplished deployments of the 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion. Figure 1 is a slide is from the official intro briefing of the battalion, and shows the accomplished deployments of the unit. Counting those, where the battalion deployed with a minimum of company strength¹³ (although even deploying an OMLT to Afghanistan requires half a company strength and the most capable officers and NCOs from the staff), it is visible that the battalion was not “at home” as a unit since 2001. Consequently, the battalion cannot conduct effective battalion level exercise or training, and as a matter of fact, preparing and deploying a company size element requires the majority of the battalion’s available resources from every aspect.

¹³KRK (SFOR MSU- Multinational Special Unit, Bosnia), MH ÖBZ (SFOR Security and Guard Battalion, Bosnia), MH Száll.Z (Transport and Security Battalion, Iraq), KGYSZD (ISAF Light Infantry Company, Afghanistan), PRT (ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Team, Afghanistan), KFOR (Kosovo Force, Infantry company, Kosovo).



Figure 1. Deployments of the 25/88th LMB

Source: 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion, “Introduction Presentation” (PowerPoint presentation, Szolnok 2010).

Today, not just the 25/88th, but almost every of the (SOC) units are still heavily engaged in missions abroad. Whenever possible, these units conduct joint exercises where they practice their “core” tasks and the mutual support they have to provide each other. Despite these efforts, because of their subordination to different Brigade headquarters, ergo differing tasking and deployment cycle, the comprehensive (cumulative) capabilities and their effectiveness are limited.

There is an additional serious problem with Hungarian SOF. Unfortunately, because of misinterpretation or misunderstanding in the Hungarian military terminology, under the term “special operations”--with the exception of a small group of adepts--many understand as tasks, which affect what the special forces do. There is no clear distinction between SF and SOF. Many subject matter experts realized this, as it appears in recent

writings. For example, LTC Imre Porkoláb highlights this mistake in his PhD dissertation and clearly states the exact definitions.¹⁴ This misunderstanding caused, that the official title of the 34th battalion in English means “Special Operation Battalion.” This may be confusing during operations, especially within coalitional or other international military environment. Observing the tasks and organization of the 34th battalion--later in this paper--it is obvious that their primary role and purpose is very similar to the tasks of US Army Special Forces battalions and does not necessarily represent the full spectrum of special operations capability. In this paper, to avoid further misunderstanding, the name of the 34th battalion will be used as 34th Bercsényi László Special Forces Battalion (BLSFB).

This incorrectness of the definitions (or their understanding) generated a second grade effect, which is far more confusing and harmful. Under the definition “special operations” a wide range of civilian--and sadly military--decision makers understand that those are the tasks of exclusively the 34th BLSFB. This is clearly visible in the composition of the JFC special operations workgroup--introduced later in chapter 4--where only the 34th battalion has representatives; neither the 25/88th, nor the 5/24th (as SOF/SOC units) has a delegated officer.

One can conclude that this is a reason why--under the umbrella of “developing special operations capabilities”--the HDF concentrates exclusively on the development of the 34th battalion’s capabilities, without putting it into the frame of a more

¹⁴LTC Imre Porkoláb, “The Role of Special Operations Forces in Military Operations of the Asymmetric Warfare, Especially Countering the International Terrorism” (PhD diss., Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest 2008), 72.

comprehensive group of special operations forces. And perhaps this is why--so far--the HDF did not establish the distinct category of special operations forces within the army.

What Now?

Being aware of the above mentioned difficulties, coupled with the fact that the Hungarian Defense Forces does not consider these units distinct or special enough to establish a new category (definitely, a branch would be too ambitious), one may raise the question if these SOC units (with the exception of the 34th battalion) are necessary at all for the accomplishment of the missions of the HDF.

Observing the present effectiveness of the SOF units in today's conflicts and acknowledging the theses and predictions of many military theorists that special operations will have a great importance in future conflicts, one can see the reason why many nations commit significant resources into the establishment or development of their respective special operations forces. But in case of the HDF one may approach this problem of necessity from a different direction. Should HDF be satisfied with its present, dispersed--and therefore limited--special operations capability, or should it invest a little bit more effort into the transformation process and establish distinct SOF?

Despite the fact that the former Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense stated that the reform of the HDF is finished, it is not.¹⁵ Even the organization of core infantry battalions will change in the future according to some plans.¹⁶

¹⁵László Szűcs, "Debrecenben járt a minisztérium államtitkára" [Undersecretary of Defense visited Debrecen], *Honvedelem.hu*, 10 March 2010, www.honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/18814/vadai_agnes_debrecenben.html (accessed 10 April 2010).

Indeed, the HDF probably plans the development of a more complex SO capability.¹⁷ Among the long term SO capabilities of the HDF there is a sentence, which says that the special force component will receive additional (special operations) supporting capabilities, which provides more complex special operations capabilities. This however is anything but exact; none of the involved units, definition of supporting capabilities or a set timeline is in that source. And based on that HDF hardly finished the development of near term SO capabilities (between 2005 and 2010), the mid-term capabilities may last even longer, the long term capabilities may change, be cancelled or simply fade away as circumstances, differing opinions and available resources will dictate.

One may deduce two significant observations. First, that if there are necessary changes to be made, then there is only limited time available. Despite the recent retirement surge, during which significant proportion of the experienced senior officers and NCOs left the army,¹⁸ the majority of the involved units still have trained and skilled officers and NCOs, who have the experience. Their contribution may reduce the cost and the time needed to establish an effective SOF. Second, without thorough understanding,

¹⁶COL György Holp “A korszerűsödő lövészkoncepció” [The improving infantry concept], *Defense Forces Review*, no 5 (Budapest: Ministry of Defense, Defense Staff, September 2009).

¹⁷LTC László Forray, “Possible Improvement of the Training, Preparation and Equipment of the Special Operations Battalion” (PhD diss., Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest, 2009), 149.

¹⁸László Szűcs, Generációk hiányoznak a parancsnokság állományából” [Interview with the Commander of the JFC], *Honvedelem.hu*, 8 July 2009, www.honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/15679 (accessed 10 April 2010).

the future changes may pose a risk to the SOC units, especially the 25/88 LMB. The risk is “generalization”: because of simple “anti-elitism” or the misunderstanding of the nature, skills, and needs of special units, they will be forced to fit into the general picture of the conventional infantry units.

To find the answer to the primary research question, one has to ask additional questions. The first two emerging questions of the readers--or decision making officials--are probably the “Why?” and “How?” To develop a correct answer founded on facts and analysis, we have to find answers for additional questions.

How can SOF use its unique capabilities to support HDF’s fundamental missions and expected future commitments abroad? Definitely, if there are no foreseeable tasks or missions for a more robust SOF then it hard to justify its necessity.

If the answer to the first question supports the need of SOF, it is well worth to identify, what existing units may form the basis for SOF? If the HDF already possess at least part of the necessary units with the adequate characteristics, it means a significant reduction in time and costs of the establishment process.

As it was mentioned before, during the analysis the paper will compare the features and capabilities of Hungarian special operations forces (HUNSOF) units to the United States Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF). Choosing ARSOF as a reference is based on several facts (which are visible later in the paper): both countries are NATO members; American mobile training teams help in the training of the Hungarian special forces; many officers and NCOs of the HUNSOF units graduated from the US Army Ranger School and from the Special Forces qualification course; the countries deploy a US-Hungarian unit in Afghanistan; and the organization and tasks of

HUNSOF units are similar of respective ARSOF units. An additional reason why the ARSOF is a suitable reference is that it gained its current capabilities and status after a long and eventful process started basically in World War II, and it has a great amount of experience with contemporary armed conflicts.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce some of the more significant pieces of available literature, which the author of this thesis used during the research process. The literature forms two distinct groups: the US literature, and the Hungarian literature.

United States Literature

The available American literature regarding the history of United States Army Special Operations Forces (USASOF) and special operations in general is quite large. The most official introduction to special operations forces is in FM 3-05, *Special Operation Forces*.¹⁹ As the comprehensive manual of the USASOF, the book contains the detailed introduction and description of USASOF units.

In its first chapter, it analyzes the involvement of USASOF in various types and ranges of military operations. It shows the nature of special operations warfare through factors (like initiative, disruption, or preemption, etc.) and gives a short summary about SOF capabilities or considerations in each of these factors which one has to consider during the employment of SOF.

In the same chapter the manual gives good explanation about the special operations operational mission criteria. It states, that there are five critical operational mission criteria, which may provide guidance for a commander employing SOF. Thus, a commander has to consider, if the mission is appropriate, how it supports the campaign

¹⁹Department of the Army, FM 3-05, *Army Special Operation Forces* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006).

plan, operationally feasible, does he have the adequate resources, and that the mission justifies the risk.

In the next chapter the manual defines the core tasks of the USASOF units, which will be discussed in chapter 3. It gives a short, but detailed description of each of the above mentioned tasks, and these are the descriptions and definitions that this paper will refer during the introduction of possible tasks of HUNSOF (see chapter 3).

The manual introduces the relevant USASOF forces in detail, and gives a good description about their organizational structure, capabilities and specific role within the SOF community. A separate chapter addresses the aspects of command and control of USASOF units. It describes the various levels of commands, their purpose and tasks and the various command relationships among the units during the joint operations where SOF is involved.

As an important aspect of warfare FM 3-05 discusses the targeting process and the planning and employment of joint fires in a separate chapter. It shows the key considerations of employing lethal and nonlethal fires, describes the targeting cycle and emphasizes the effectiveness of joint fires.

In separate chapters, the manual gives detailed description of the communication, intelligence and logistical support of the USASOF. It introduces the SOF units existing capabilities, employment considerations and planning factors regarding each of these functions. It is detailed and comprehensive enough that for example within the logistic support it quite thoroughly discusses considerations about host-nation and contractor support during SO.

Certainly this manual is the most exact piece of literature regarding current capabilities and facts about the USASOF, but it does not use historical vignettes or analysis, it just explains considerations and fundamental features of the employment of USASOF.

To get a picture about the history of USASOF, one should read civilian books. The book of Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. special Operations Forces*²⁰ is a good written history of United States SOF. Its title foreshadows a possible opinion of a careful reader: establishing, organizing and sometime keeping alive the special operations forces of the United States was similar to unconventional warfare. It required dedicated men, unconventional methods, engagements of many key persons in many areas and it took time.

Its significance regarding the topic of this research is that it shows the difficult and complicated process of the past development of special operations forces in the United States; similar events may occur during the development of HUNSOF.

She starts the introduction of SOF from Second World War. The book gives just a real general historical review of SF, the Underwater Demolition Teams and SEALs of the Navy, and the Air Commandos of the Air Force. The author shows the general activities of SOF during the Vietnam War, and gives an overall picture about the status of SOF after the war.

In the next chapter she gives a short introduction about the distinct organizational culture and the friction this culture caused between SOF and the conventional military.

²⁰Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997).

She describes the key events of the selection and training respectively of Special Forces, the SEALs and the special operators of Air Force.

From chapter 4 of her book, the author focuses on the struggles and engagements among the political powers, the various service commands and the SOF advocates, which formed, and influenced SOF from the 1970s. As a key event in the history of special operations, Marquis gives a short introduction of the tragedy of Desert One (Operation Eagle Claw), as the triggering event which initiated a major reformation process of SOF based on the recommendation of the Holloway Commission, which was responsible of the investigation. She introduces those key personnel and temporary organizations and committees, whose deeds and influence greatly affected the existence of SOF, and gives examples all the hardships, the SOF supporters had to overcome. The next major operation she uses as a historical vignette is Operation Urgent Fury (1983, Grenada). She gives a relatively long introduction of the operation based mostly on the information of witnesses. The analysis of the operation is limited primarily to highlight those problems which still existed despite the previous reforms.²¹

The next two chapters show the political and interest fights in Washington. The author shows the preliminary reasons and the implementation of the various laws and acts, which influenced SOF.

The next two major SOF related operations in the book is Operation Just Cause (1989 Panama), and Desert Storm and Desert Shield (1991 Iraq). Next to the actual events, especially during the latter case she analyses somewhat more thoroughly the

²¹Ibid., 91.

relationship between the conventional military (leaders) and SOF. She uses this to draw the conclusion, that after Desert Storm the nexus between the conventional military and special operation forces changed significantly: the serious distrust and friction disappeared. She states, that it became clear by the summer of 1991, that the United States has a strong special operations capability.²² Still, at the end of her book, she gives a short vision regarding the future of SOF, and as a key thought the author emphasizes that the distinct organizational culture of SOF still carries an inherent risk, which the “internal” adversaries may use to generalize the special units.

As the reader will conclude, surprisingly despite all the successes of SOF, in many cases only the hard work and behind the scenes efforts of few dedicated enthusiasts saved the existence of SOF and helped them to survive the various trends and changes within the military. Marquis focuses on the political and highest level military decision makers, who were involved in the initiation of the changes. For this, the book represents a valuable source of information about the complexity of a major military transformation or organizational change. The book may be useful for a Hungarian decision maker who is involved in the future development process of HUNSOF. First, as a good compilation of past lessons learned during the history of USASOF, it explains the reasons behind the “SOF truths” and the points of FM 3-05. Secondly, showing the behind the scene “fights” and lobbying over USASOF, one may find the necessary “do”-s and “don’t”-s, which may make the development process of HUNSOF more effective.

²²Ibid., 250.

Marquis introduces the past of USASOF, and FM 3-05 shows its present. The book of David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, *United States Special Operations Forces*,²³ shows a possible--and according to them--necessary way of future transformation of SOF. They start their book with the description of the tasks and missions SOF have to carry out. They use this description to highlight, that SOF is and has to be very diverse and flexible. Guided by this observation they ask questions if SOF is adequate in its current form, or is its reformation necessary?

They discuss the history of SOF from 2001. Their primary focus in the first part of their book is the War on terrorism, and SOF's role in it. They show some aspects of the employment of SOF through the personal accounts of SOF operators. Each of these short accounts shows the activities and concerns of the relevant operators in a certain area of SO ranging from SF tasks to aviation and civilian affairs.

In the next part of the book, they show the selection process and the training of SOF personnel. They primarily emphasize those fundamental factors of the selection and training, which are specific to a distinct unit (service) within the SOF community. They use examples mostly from the SF and SEAL selection and training, and as a conclusion they state, that there is a disparity in SOF training. Training for direct action is more important than training of cultural sensitivity or communication. Thus, according to the authors, the US military values some SOF capabilities more than others.

The next chapter introduces the history of SOF, from the Second World War to Somalia. The authors dedicate a whole chapter to this latter, and consider it a valuable

²³David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, *United States Special Operations Forces* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

case study, while they state, that the operation itself was a political, strategic, operational and tactical failure.²⁴ They analyze the operation briefly, and provide right and wrong lessons as well.

The next chapter is about the role of SOF. They analyze the difference between special and elite troops and units, and try to explain what makes SOF special? For this they examine the characteristics of SO, and conclude, that the most distinguishing attributes of SOF are its “commando” and “warrior-diplomat” skills.²⁵ They show SOF’s direct and indirect missions, and its independent and supporting role. They conclude that because of the change of the threats, SOF has to change its role and missions. In the following chapter, they introduce the future of warfare, and its impact on SOF’s future role. Based on their observations, on the final part of the book, they emphasize that with adequate interagency and conventional military support SOF is able to counter the asymmetric threat which the United States have to face with. However, according to the authors, their current organization is not effective, so they propose an agenda for the transformation. Among others, as the most significant steps they propose the establishment of a separate command, the “Unconventional Warfare Command,” which would control the indirect action capabilities of SOF. They recommend setting up a separate command which would be responsible for the direct actions, the “Special Operations Strike Command.” Finally they propose changes not only in the SOF

²⁴Ibid., 129.

²⁵Ibid., 150.

community, but within the national security apparatus of the United States.²⁶ The significance of the book is that it shows that even a well structured organization like USASOF may need to change. According to the authors, SOF's key role is to fight the asymmetric threats (which are -according to Tucker and Lamb- the collection of means an adversary may use to counter America's superiority in large-scale conventional warfare) and they have to be tailored to better perform in that kind of warfare. Thus, during the future development of HUNSOF, the proposals of the authors may be relevant, especially observing Hungary's commitment in the contemporary military endeavors in Afghanistan.

Hungarian Literature

The problem with the Hungarian military literature on the contrary is that it is small. And in the case of special operation, because this capability got only greater importance after 2004, the number of books that deal with this topic is more limited. There is a good source of information in the recent PhD dissertations that can be found online on the website of the Hungarian Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University.²⁷ The authors of these dissertations are those senior officers, who had the possibility to study the topic in various international military institutions and who are or were in a position directly linked to one of the Hungarian SOF units. The dissertations are available for everyone, and definitely represent the most comprehensive contemporary facts and recommendations regarding the Hungarian special operation forces.

²⁶Ibid., 234.

²⁷www.zmne.hu.

The first dissertation which analyses the special operations forces is the work of LTC Csaba Kovács,²⁸ and its main topic is the role, missions and tasks of special operations forces in the 21st Century. The paper was written in 2007. His work is a good introduction of SOF in general, and provides a thorough understanding for the reader about the basic definitions and the fundamentals of the employment considerations of SOF. He provides a good introduction of the NATO command structure, within HUNSOF supposed to operate abroad.

He does not introduce HUNSOF in detail, and just mentions possible tasks and missions.²⁹ He emphasizes the importance of a distinct special operations command within the HDF, but does not identify the subordinate HUNSOF units in detail. Interestingly, among the units which would belong to this proposed command, he mentions only the 34th BLSFB and units conducting psychological operations, civilian-military operations and the search and rescue team of the air force (which is not combat search and rescue). He does not consider either the 25/88th battalion or the 5/24th battalion as subordinate to this command.

A more detailed analysis of the comprehensive special operations capability of the HDF is available in the dissertation of LTC Imre Porkoláb.³⁰ His dissertation focuses on the SOF employment in relation to the asymmetric warfare, terrorism and guerilla

²⁸LTC Kovács, Csaba, “The Role, Tasks and Missions of Special Operations Forces in the Military Operations of the 21st Century” (PhD diss., Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest, 2007).

²⁹Ibid., 71.

³⁰Porkoláb.

warfare. Hi provides a more detailed introduction of units with special operations capabilities, but later in the dissertation he focuses on the employment of 34th battalion. He clearly draws the conclusion, that Hungary needs special operations capability, which--within the wide spectrum of operations--has to focus on military assistance.

He mentions the importance of the strategic level employment of SOF, and that economical use of the available resources is crucial during the development and employment of SOF.³¹ Based on the research, he found that Hungary is not ready to answer the challenges of the new, asymmetric threats in their whole spectrum. The HDF (and within it SOF) does not have the comprehensive doctrine related to the new threats, and there are faults in the training as well. He warns, that during the development of SOF, HDF has to grant structural and doctrinal flexibility to successfully shape the necessary capabilities.³²

For successfully employ SOF, there is a need of clear tasks and missions, effective command and control, and a suitably organized unit. His research's key observation is that in 2008 (the date of the dissertation) one may not clearly find out, if Hungary possessed those key requirements or not.³³ Furthermore, regarding the command and control, he clearly warns that any higher level military command has to be aware of the distinctiveness of SOF. Parallel to this, only properly trained, educated and

³¹Ibid., 40.

³²Ibid., 41.

³³Ibid., 71.

adept personnel has to work on the development of SO capabilities, while it is imperative to establish a strategic level command for HUNSOF.³⁴

Almost the same observations are in the dissertation of LTC László Forray.³⁵ He clearly identifies the need of adequate organization and command and control, next to a clear task and purpose statement of the relevant HUNSOF units. He identified the need of adequate monetary, logistical and legal background as well,³⁶ and he later makes remarks about the hindering effects of inadequate legal background in case of the employment of the 34th battalion. Later on his essay, the emphasis is on the training and structure of the 34th BLSFB, so the majority of his observations regard this unit. However, he gives an even better introduction of HUNSOF units, with more detailed description of their respective tasks and purposes.

More importantly, he introduces the existing plans for the short-, mid- and long-term development of special operations capability of the HDF, and explains the required readiness levels of the 34th BLSFB (again, by mistake the SO capability of the HDF means the capability and readiness of the 34th BLSFB). This is important, because among the long-term capabilities, there is a more comprehensive special operations capability mentioned. The source however does not clearly identify the time, and the exact feature of this broader SO capability.³⁷

³⁴Ibid., 104.

³⁵Forray.

³⁶Ibid., 13.

³⁷Ibid., 28.

Another important fact is in the dissertation--which related to this paper--that the full operational capability of the 34th BLSFB is due to the end of 2010. This means that the near future provides good opportunity to start developing a more comprehensive SOF capability of the HDF, and to avoid wasting more time and perishable resources.

CHAPTER 3

POSSIBLE TASKS AND MISSIONS OF HUNSOF

In this chapter, the most probable tasks of HUNSOF units are introduced. There is an assumption which will form the basis of the conclusion of this chapter. Based on the fact that Hungary in the NMS identified the same threats and started the establishment of special operations capability within an alliance (NATO), one may assume that the identified--or specified--tasks of HUNSOF are probably very similar to the tasks of ARSOF. Obviously, Hungary may have a limited SOF task set, based on the different geographic location, and different global interests.

The detailed introduction of the subtasks, which belong to the core tasks of special operations forces, is definitely beyond the scope of this paper. Explanation can be found in the relevant FM 3-05 chapters, and equally comprehensive analyses are written in both PhD³⁸ dissertations.

The capabilities and tasks of ARSOF PSYOP units and tasks of the Special Operations Helicopter unit will not be discussed. This is primarily because the PSYOP unit and capabilities do not belong to special operations forces in the Hungarian military terminology, and the Hungarian land forces do not have aviation assets at all; the helicopters belong to the air force. These are additional reasons which limit the volume of the SO tasks of HUNSOF compared to ARSOF tasks.

³⁸Forray, 29; Porkoláb, 87.

Legal Aspects of the Employment of Military Force

Next to the NMS, law will determine the use of military force. Because of this, it is useful to start with the existing legal aspects and regulations of employing the units of HDF as military force.

The principal guidelines of the employment of military force within or out of the national boundaries of the Republic of Hungary are the Constitution, the *2004/CV. Law about the Hungarian Defense Forces*, and the relevant international laws and regulations.

The government may employ the military force in accordance with the approved defense plans within the boundaries of Hungary in peacetime, before the introduction of a state of emergency, primarily against armed groups break into the country.

According to paragraph 70 of the abovementioned law, Hungary may employ the “specially designated and prepared forces” to accomplish tasks, related to “the global war of terrorism,” outside of the territory of Hungary, as part of a coalition or alliance, in the full spectrum conflict (from peace support operations to conventional operations).

It is important to highlight that this law does not make difference between SOF and conventional units, which means that employment of both requires the same level and magnitude of political decision making.

Specified Tasks of HUNSOE

To successfully analyze the applicability or validity of the missions of HUNSOE, the ARSOE tasks as a reference will be used. As FM 3-05 states, the core tasks of the ARSOE are: unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID), special reconnaissance (SR), direct action (DA), counterterrorism (CT), psychological operations

(PSYOP), civil affairs operations (CAO), and counter-proliferation (CP) of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).³⁹

There are two main groups of sources regarding the specified tasks of HUNSOF. The first group is the official directives and founding orders of the respective units, which defines their tasks and purposes. The specified tasks of the respective HUNSOF units are introduced in chapter 4.

The other source of the expected and specified tasks of SOF is the PhD dissertations of the National Defense University. The information in the relevant theses is comprehensive and informative enough to consider it as a solid basis for the introduction of the missions of HUNSOF.

The dissertation of LTC Forray contains a quite detailed explanation of the SOF tasks and missions. But again, the scope of this dissertation is too small to describe and analyze all (sub)tasks in detail.

Perhaps the easiest way to introduce the core tasks of HUNSOF is to show the analysis of LTC Porkoláb, who is currently the commander of the 34th BLSFB. In his dissertation he presents a simple compilation and analysis of the possible tasks of HUNSOF, based on the fact that Hungary is a NATO member, EU member, and it has its own national interests.

The tasks in the table (with the exception of unconventional warfare) are the same as the core tasks of the Army Special Operations Forces according to FM 3-05. Observing the table (see table 1), it is visible that many tasks derived from the various

³⁹Department of the Army, FM 3-05, 2-1.

requirements of different organizations (NATO, EU) are common. The “classic” three (special reconnaissance, direct action, and foreign internal defense) appears in every row as a specified task while counterinsurgency and counter terrorism appears as implied tasks depending on the regional security environment.

Interestingly, there are only implied tasks derived from the Hungarian National Security Strategy. The reason for that according to LTC Porkoláb is, that there were not clearly identified tasks of SOF before 2008 (the publication of the dissertation). He considers this as a significantly hindering factor, as it is mentioned in the dissertation.⁴⁰ (As it may be seen in the next chapter, the specified missions of the 34th BLSFB are not really exact indeed.)

⁴⁰Porkoláb, 118.

Table 1. Possible tasks of HUNSOF

	NEW THREATS	TASKS
NATO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regional conflicts - failing states - terrorism - proliferations of WMD 	Specified tasks: Special reconnaissance Direct action Foreign internal defense Implied tasks: Counterinsurgency operations Counter-terrorism operations Counter WMD operations
European Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - terrorism - failing states - proliferation of WMD - regional conflicts - organized crime 	Specified Tasks: Special reconnaissance Direct action Foreign internal defense Implied tasks: Counter-terrorism operations Counter WMD operations
Hungarian National Security Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local conflicts and deteriorating stability of the Euro-Atlantic region - threats by rouge states - terrorism - proliferation of WMD 	Implied tasks: Special reconnaissance Direct action Foreign internal defense Counter-terrorism operations Counter WMD operations HUMINT IO CMO

Source: LTC Imre Porkoláb, “The Role of Special Operations Forces in Military Operations of the Asymmetric Warfare, Especially Countering the International Terrorism” (PhD diss., Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest, 2008), 83.

Obviously, the HDF did not conduct some of the above mentioned tasks so far, but some of them are tasks which the respective units are conducting right now, or conducted before. Currently SF teams from the 34th BLSFB conduct classified missions in Afghanistan,⁴¹ while the 25/88th LMB practiced raids, hostage rescue and VIP escort missions during their deployment in the Multinational Special Unit in Bosnia.

⁴¹László Szűcs “*NATO különleges műveleti alaptanfolyam Magyarországon először*” [Special operations course opening ceremony], *Honvedelem.hu*, 2 February 2010.

In 2008, the HDF was the lead nation to command and control the activities in Kabul International Airport. The close protection team which was responsible for the protection and transportation of members of the Hungarian contingent in Kabul were soldiers from the 34th BLSFB, which was again a well suited task for the battalion.

The first MALT teams in Iraq, or the bulk of the first two contingents of the OMLT teams of the HDF in Afghanistan, consisted of members of the 34th BLSFB and the 88th LMB. The tasks of these teams somewhat resemble one of the traditional SOFs' core tasks, namely the foreign internal defense (FID). Since the third contingent however, just as the international trend shows, other regular units are participating in this mission as well.

Misuse of HUNSOF

It is worth to mention the examples of misuse of SOF units, which may happen by necessity or by mistake. Misusing SOF happens from time-to-time, and probably no country is free of mistakes made by the ineffective or improper use of their respective special units. One may talk about misuse of the SOF in two cases: first, when SOF was used and their skills were not necessary; and second, when SOF should have been used for a task but were not employed.⁴²

An example for the latter is the VIP escort tasks of Hungarian dignitaries in various areas of operations, when they visit the Hungarian contingents. Usually, the

http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/18195/kulonleges_muveleti_alaptanfolyam_megnyito.html (accessed 2 July 2010).

⁴²Porkoláb, 84. Reference to Edward G. Winters and Kent A. Paro, *The Misuse of Special Operations Forces* (Monterey, CA, Naval Postgraduate School, December 1994).

security detail consists of the troops who are deployed in that region. This is understandable because those troops are already familiar with the area and have a certain routine in the related security tasks. Other reasons are the relatively low security threat which (currently) exists in the areas, and the excessive additional licenses and funds required to deploy even a small element of security force with the escorted persons, which make it impractical.

Another--but not truly justifiable--example for not using SOF where it should have been is the additional quick reaction force platoon, which was responsible to enhance the capabilities of the Hungarian PRT for the period of the general elections in Afghanistan in 2009.⁴³ The platoon should have been able to react to security threats and attacks against the organizations and installations related to the general election. The most probable required capabilities (light, highly mobile, independent, augmented with medical and CAS calling capabilities, familiar with the used assets and tactics, good knowledge of the environment, etc.) made the 88th LMB--optionally augmented with a team from the 34th BLSFB--a suitable organization to provide this force. For some reason, however, the HDF tasked forces from other unit with this mission.

An example of using SOF, when not necessary involves some of the specified tasks of the 25/88 LMB. There are two such tasks: the combat search and rescue and non-combatant evacuation operation. These not necessarily conducted by ARSOF; however there are no other units in the HDF with the required skills for such missions: light, easily

⁴³Hungarian Ministry of Defense, Magyar Honvédség Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság [The Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces], <http://www.hm.gov.hu/rovat/7/hungarian-defence-forces> (accessed 22 November 2010).

and completely air transportable, air assault and airborne capable with short reaction time. Thus, tasking the 25/88 LMB with these missions is currently necessary.

Another example of the possible unnecessary employment of SOF is visible in the newest additional tasks the 25/88th LMB received. The tasks belong to the quite vague term “force protection.” Equipping a company with APCs within a unit who is primarily special, light infantry and air assault and give them anticipated tasks as convoy escort and guarding key installations are even acceptable acts, but are hard to justify. As life shows, these tasks are commonly executed just as well by any conventional mechanized infantry company both in Afghanistan, as part of the Hungarian PRT, and in Kosovo. Another additional task is the so called limited military police capability, which means that the company does not have investigative authority. As the HDF has a dedicated MP battalion, it is questionable whether this is a necessary additional skill. There is an important fact, however. If the battalion deploys, and any of these companies will be tasked to conduct force protection and military police tasks (with or without a necessary sustainment and command and control element), this means, that the unit--and the HDF--loses its combat effectiveness as a special operation support infantry battalion.

Interestingly, there is a very understandable and simple “warning” in the doctrine of the 25/88th LMB, which says that “the light mixed battalion is not a ‘Joker.’” Inappropriate and unnecessary employment of it may lead to disaster.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴Hungarian Defense Forces, A Könnyű Vegyes Zászlóalj Doktrínája [Doctrine of the Light Mixed Battalion], (Szolnok, 2005), 3.

Conclusion

Chapter 3, tried to discover whether Hungary defined the same tasks for its SOF as the United States Army does for ARSOF. Observing the relevant Hungarian literature, one may conclude that yes, but with certain understandable modifications. As a present problem, the examples of misusing existing SOF show that these tasks are either not clear enough, or not acknowledged by responsible decision makers, by necessity or by mistake.

The final conclusion is that HUNSOF has very similar core tasks as ARSOF has, even if the tasks are currently not detailed enough. Not surprisingly the next logically emerging question is whether HDF has the necessary forces to carry out these tasks?

CHAPTER 4

EXISTING SOC UNITS

Chapter 4 examines if the units are similar as well. The analysis based on the assumption that if the tasks of HUNSOB and ARSOB are similar, than probably similar organizations have to exist to accomplish these missions.

Because of the limited scope of this paper, however, the paper will introduce only those units, which are the equivalent of ARSOB Special Forces Groups and the 75th Ranger Regiment (which means the 34th, the 25/88th battalions) or have obvious special operation (related) capability (like the 5/24th battalion).

One must not forget the difference between the strength of the two armies. While SOF represent a distinct service within the United States Armed Forces, the HDF's special operations capability--and thus the SOF units--are significantly smaller.

Because the introduction of SOF units is quite detailed in FM 3-05, just a short summary of the major organizations of ARSOB excerpted from the above mentioned field manual is enough to establish a basic understanding of the relevant forces.

United States Army Special Operations Command

FM 3-05 defines Army special operations forces as "those Active and Reserve Component Army forces designated by the Secretary of Defense that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. They are also called ARSOB."⁴⁵ The following short introduction of ARSOB--the paper needs only

⁴⁵Department of the Army, FM 3-05, Glossary-8.

general overview of ARSOF as a reference- is based on FM 3-05, where a thorough and detailed description of ARSOF is available.

The United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) is the primary command level which is responsible for every aspects of the training and deployment of ARSOF. The USASOC consists of direct reporting units which are the United States Army Special Forces Command (USASFC), the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS), the 4th Psychological Operations Group (POG), the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) (SOAR[A]), the 75th Ranger Regiment, and the Sustainment Brigade(SO) (SB).

The USASFC consists of five Active Army SF groups and two National Guard groups. SF groups are the “core” units of ARSOF with an emphasis on UW capabilities. Special Forces are a unique combat arms organization, which can plan and conduct special operations across the range of military operations.

The Special Forces Group (SFG) consists of a headquarters and headquarters company, four SF battalions, and a support battalion. The SFG has adequate C2 and support elements for prolonged missions.

SF battalions consist of a HQ detachment, two or more SF companies, and a support company. SF companies consist of a company HQ (which is called a Special Forces operational detachment B [SFODB]) and six Special Forces operational detachments A (SFODAs). The SFODB is an operational command and control element and usually controls from one to six SFODAs. The SFODB can establish a special

operations command and control element or send out a liaison element to designated HQs.

The Operational Detachment Alpha is the nucleus of a SF company, it is the primary SF operational unit. The commander of the detachment is a captain, and a chief warrant officer is the deputy commander. There are two NCOs in each of the following functional areas: medical, communications, weapons, engineer and operations.

The special infantry or special support infantry within USASOC is the 75th Ranger Regiment. Rangers are a rapidly deployable airborne light infantry unit, primarily to conduct complex direct action operations with or in support of other SO units. The regiment can also execute operations in support of conventional missions, and can operate as conventional light infantry when properly augmented with other elements of combined arms.

The Ranger regiment is not regionally focused; it can conduct missions in any region of the world. The regiment's relationship with other SOF units is very close. Compared to a conventional light infantry unit the difference is that the regiment's missions have a higher level of risk and characterized by the precise, discriminate use of force. It uses specialized equipment, operational techniques, and several modes of infiltration and employment. The regiment's task is to conduct SO primarily against strategic or operational targets. The unit has to conduct operations independently or in cooperation with conventional forces or other SOF, but they can act as a light infantry unit for specific missions, if no other suitable, conventional light units are available. Typical Ranger operations include deep penetration raids or interdiction operations, and they are well tailored for forced-entry operations, airfield seizures, and the capture or

destruction of key targets. The regiment's reconnaissance company provides a full range of recon and surveillance missions.

The regimental HQ is similar to the HQ of a conventional brigade combat team. In addition to commanding and controlling three Ranger infantry battalions and the Ranger Special Troops Battalion, the regimental HQ is able to exercise operational control of other SOF units for limited time. The command posts are normally collocated with other SOF or conventional units.

The Ranger infantry battalion is the primary combat element within the regiment. It has mortar, reconnaissance, and sniper platoons, but it does not have an antitank company. It consists of a headquarter company, four infantry companies, and a support company. The battalion has a USAF tactical air control party attached to it in addition. Each rifle company has three rifle platoons and a weapons platoon.

The primary training institution of Army Special Forces is the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. The task of the school is to recruit, train, and educate U.S. Army SF, PSYOP, and CA Soldiers. The primary training institution specialized to train the necessary skills of the members of the Ranger regiment is the United States Army Ranger School.



Figure 2. ARSOF Organization

Source: Department of the Army, FM 3-05, *Army Special Operation Forces* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, September 2006), 3-01.

In summary, one may see, that ARSOF consists of special forces units, focusing on unconventional warfare, and a Ranger regiment, which is the supporting light/special infantry unit for SO. There are special operation aviation units, special operations sustainment units, the PSYOP and CA units. Designated and institutionalized training organizations exist for the selection of SF and Ranger candidates. Most importantly: all of those units are under a single, distinct command.

Hungarian Special Operation Forces

Officially, there is no such grouping of units as special operations forces in Hungary, and there is a doctrinal misunderstanding about SOF and SF, as was stated in the first chapter.

On the other hand, Hungarian special operation forces are quite well defined in recent PhD dissertations, like in LTC Forray's thesis: special operation forces are those units whose at least one basic task is to conduct special operations, or to directly support special operations.⁴⁶

In this dissertation, the author divides Hungarian special operations forces into special forces (34th BLSFB), special support infantry forces (25/88th LMB), special operations capable forces (5/24th BGRB, HDF CIMIC Center) special operation helicopter forces (86th SZHB) and cooperating forces (e.g. members of various agencies).⁴⁷

Another source of similar thoughts is LTC Porkoláb's dissertation. He also emphasize that one has to make a distinction between SF, SOF and SOC, and gives a good -translated- definition of each of them.⁴⁸

His grouping of the existing Hungarian SOF units is quite similar, with the only difference is that he does not depict the "cooperating forces" as part of SOF. In the aspect of this thesis, both groupings are suitable to introduce the existing units of HUNSOF.

⁴⁶Forray, 18.

⁴⁷Ibid., 25.

⁴⁸Porkoláb, 72.

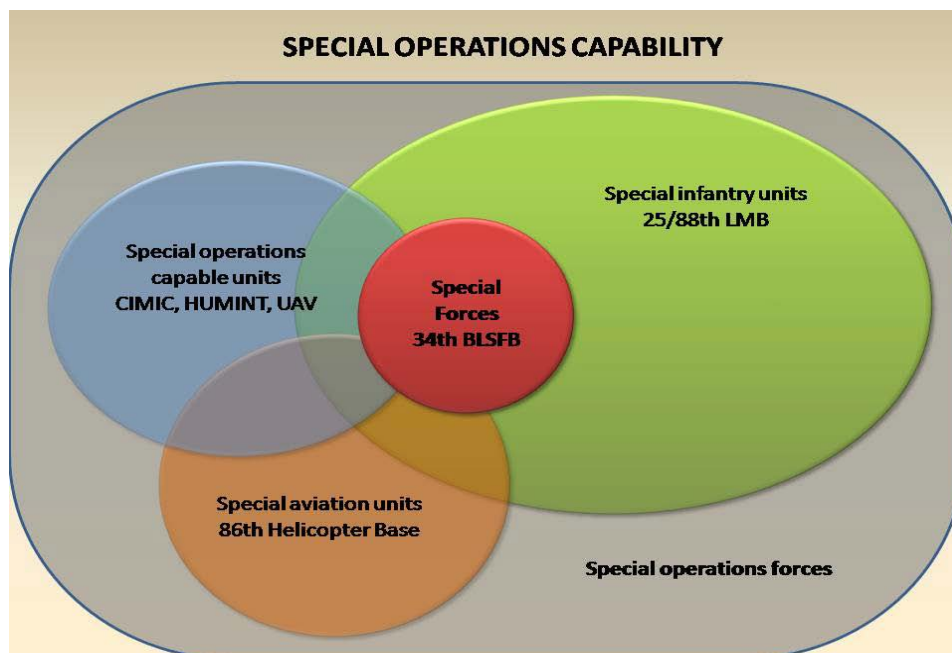


Figure 3. Components of special operations capability

Source: LTC Imre Porkoláb, “The Role of Special Operations Forces in Military Operations of the Asymmetric Warfare, Especially Countering the International Terrorism” (PhD diss., Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, Budapest, 2008), 73.

The 34th Bercsényi László Special Forces Battalion

The immediate predecessor of the 34th BLSFB was the 34th Bercsényi László Reconnaissance Battalion. The predecessor of the reconnaissance battalion was the Parachutist Battalion, which was founded on the 1st of October 1939. The battalion conducted only one airborne mission during the Second World War in 1941, and after that it fought as an infantry unit. After the war, the unit--together with many other military units--was disbanded.

The rebirth of the airborne infantry was in 1951, when an Airborne Battalion was created in Székesfehérvár. The unit existed only three years, because in 1954 the unit was deactivated, just to be activated again in 1959 with a new structure. In 1963 it dislocated

to its current garrison in the city of Szolnok. In 1990 the unit was renamed after a famous Hungarian military member, Graf László Bercsényi. The unit functioned as a long range reconnaissance battalion up to 2004.

The Founding and the Tasks

In 2005 the Minister of Defense directed the founding of the 34th BLSFB. The unit is an independent battalion with the legal status of a regiment. Its official name and title is the 34th Bercsényi László Special Operations Battalion. LTC László Forray in his PhD thesis excerpt clearly reveals this misinterpretation, and suggests that the name of the 34th battalion should be changed to the “34th Special Forces Battalion.”⁴⁹ (On the contrary, on the qualification tab of the 34th battalion the text correctly shows “Különleges Erők,” which means Special Forces.)

The unit is under the direct command of the HDF Joint Force Command, its immediate service related superior is the G-3 Operations branch of the JFC. Regarding sustainment, the unit--just as the 25/88th--is dependent to the 86th Szolnok Helicopter Base. This is not an advantageous relationship, because despite the fact that a lot of administrative issue is handled by the 86th, they still belong to air force, which makes this “inter-arms” cooperation somewhat less than seamless.

⁴⁹Forray, 7.

The purpose of the establishment of the new battalion was to create a unit which is capable to accomplish missions during the asymmetric warfare of the 21st Century.⁵⁰

According to the intent of the HDF, the characteristics of the unit should be:

1. Professionalism and up-to-date equipment;
2. Economical use of resources;
3. High state of readiness and quickly deployable;
4. Ability to operate through small, modular groups;
5. Ability to accomplish wide range of special operations.

Parallel to the desired capabilities of the new unit, the Minister of Defense stated the unit's primary tasks, which according to the founding order include:

1. React to unexpected incidents which require military force;
2. Conduct special operations unilaterally or within a coalition framework;
3. Accomplish military missions of counter-terrorism warfare;
4. Participate in the peace support operations of the HDF;
5. Participate in peace and wartime search and rescue operations;
6. Participate in crisis reaction operations.⁵¹

Based on the superior's orders, the unit's fundamental mission statement is the following:

Plan, support and conduct special operations to accomplish national or coalition objectives, within the full spectrum of conflict (peace, crisis and wartime),⁵² by using

⁵⁰MAJ Gábor Sánta "Introduction Briefing of the 34th BLSFB" (PowerPoint presentation, Szolnok, 2010).

⁵¹Order of the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Hungary. No. 158/2005.

methods and means which are usually not employed by conventional military forces, and participation in the military operations of counter-terrorist warfare.

Organization

The most authentic source of information is the official introduction briefing made by the battalion's current chief of operations, MAJ Gábor Sánta. Based on the fact that the unit is relatively young, and wide range of information regarding the battalion is classified, the basic source of information throughout of this paper is this presentation.⁵³

The battalion staff is a fully functioning staff organization based on a standard organization of an independent infantry battalion of the HDF, but obviously in some positions the skill identifiers are modified due to the required airborne or scuba diver capabilities.

The battalion's executive force consists of two Special Operation Companies supported by combat service support and sustainment subunits. Modularity and flexibility were the two key aspects during the determination of the organizational structure, and it is achieved by the small special operation teams (SOT).⁵⁴

⁵²According to the Hungarian military terminology there are three elements of the spectrum of conflicts: peacetime, crisis situation, wartime. So, the spectrum of operations are peace support, crisis management/reaction and conventional military operations.

⁵³MAJ Gábor Sánta, "Introduction Briefing of the 34th BLSFB" (PowerPoint presentation, Szolnok, 2010).

⁵⁴In case of the subunits, in the essay the best literal translation will be used to designate them. Thus, the organizational element which is called "special operation team" is the equivalent of an ARSOF special forces operational detachment-A (SFOD-A).

Each maneuver company consists of a company staff and eight SOTs. Two of the teams are airborne capable, and trained to conduct HAHO (high altitude-high open) jumps. Four of the teams are specialized in vehicle insertions, and two teams are trained to conduct waterborne operations (they are trained scuba divers and airborne qualified also). The second company's scuba teams and their capability "slot" was transferred into the battalion staff and the support company. The structure of the SOTs resembles the build-up of the U.S. SF A-teams. For this, the various positions within a twelve men SOT team consist of: commander (captain), deputy commander (warrant officer), operations NCO (warrant officer), intelligence NCO (SGT 1st class), 2 signal (NCO, SPC), 2 medic (NCO, SPC), 2 weapons (NCO, SPC), 2 engineer (NCO, SPC).



Figure 4. 34th BLSFB SOT team structure

Source: MAJ Gábor Sánta, “Introduction briefing of the 34th BLSFB” (PowerPoint presentation, Szolnok, 2010).

Training and Selection

The primary documents which influenced the training were the 2004/CV, Law of the Republic of Hungary, MC 437 NATO Special Operations Policy, and the 79/2006, Directive of the Chief of Defense Staff.

The fundamental structure of the training is similar to the generally accepted and employed “training block” system of the HDF. The system groups similar training events and builds up the cycle from these blocks. The training of the battalion is further

enhanced by the help of an US mobile training team (MTT),⁵⁵ which conducts many of the SF training events. The training contains both national and international events. National training events are primarily the selection phase, the basic training, the regional training, and mandatory additional training required by law throughout HDF. The international part of the training includes the participation in various military schools and courses in the United States, and participation in various special operations related courses and seminars. Some of the training events run parallel on both national and international levels, like the HAHO/HALO⁵⁶ parachute training, or the JTAC (Joint Tactical Air Controller) training.

The training of the battalion consists of five distinct blocks (see figure 5). The first is the selection which is the training and selection event at the same time. The applicants conduct physically demanding basic tactical training while being tested by psychologists. The basic training is a narrowed tactical training, focusing on SF related tactics and procedures. The third block introduces team oriented training. The phase starts with the small unit tactics training. Within this, there is a special focus on urban and MOUT techniques. The next block of training is the various infiltration and exfiltration techniques. During this, each team receives a basic training to the more “common” methods, while they receive an enhanced training specific to their team’s role.

⁵⁵The first mobile training team started training in 2006. László Szűcs “NATO különleges műveleti alaptanfolyam Magyarországon először” [Special operations course opening ceremony], *Honvedelem.hu*, 2 February 2010, http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/18195/kulonleges_muveleti_alaptanfolyam_megnyito.html (accessed 2 July 2010).

⁵⁶These are two types of airborne infiltration methods, High Altitude-High Opening and High Altitude-Low Opening.

The last event of the third block is team position specific training. This is again a parallel training event, some of the candidates receive this training in Hungary, some of them graduate from the respective course from the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

The next major training block is the fourth, which consists of the survival and the geographical orientation training. The survival training block is a complete chain of training events, dealing with survival, evasion, resistance and escape, while the geographical orientation training mostly based on the locations of the ongoing and the possible future deployment areas. Those members of the battalion who finished the fourth block of training are combat ready, and may deploy during a special forces mission. The focus in the fifth training phase is on maintaining of the obtained skills, and teaching additional skills during advanced courses or cross-training.

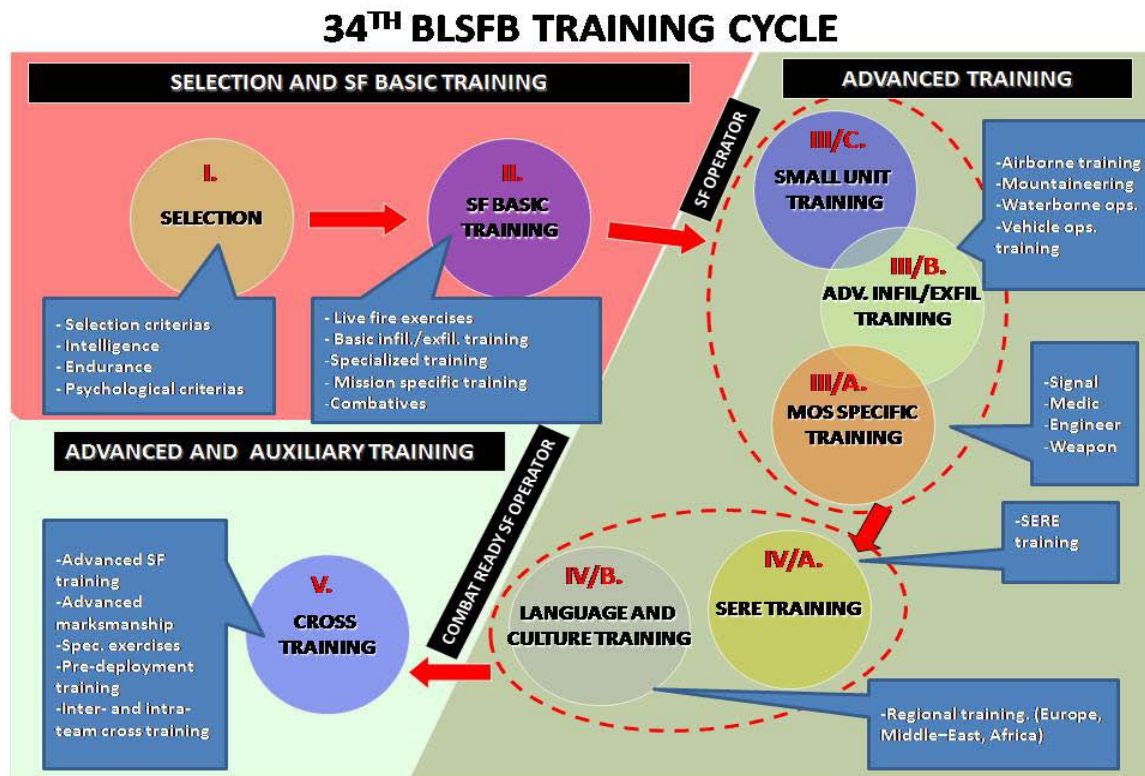


Figure 5. 34th BLSFB training cycle

Source: MAJ Gábor Sánta, "Introduction briefing of the 34th BLSFB" (PowerPoint presentation, Szolnok, 2010).

Recent Deployments

Elements of the 34th battalion deployed several times. Until 2006 it provided the majority of the Light Infantry Company in Kabul, Afghanistan. Additionally teams deployed into Iraq, where they operated as training teams for the Iraqi security forces. The unit--together with the 25/88th--provided the 4th contingent of the Hungarian PRT in Afghanistan in 2008. At the same time, a team deployed into Kabul where they were the security detail for the commanding officers of the ISAF operated international airport. From 2009 again, together with the 25/88th they formed the first rotation of the

Hungarian OMLT (Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team) in Afghanistan. In the same year, the unit deployed teams to conduct special operations under ISAF command.

The 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion

The History of the Battalion

The latest official document which regulates the status of the battalion is the 33/2007th Directive of the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Hungary. This defines the battalion as a unit level military organization, with an independent table of organization and equipment, part of the (combat) units of the HDF JFC, under the direct command of the 25th infantry brigade.

The first predecessor of the battalion was the 88th Air Mobile Battalion. The battalion was founded in 1993, and in 1994 officially received its standard from the President of the Republic of Hungary. The changes of the HDF during the last two decades are clearly identifiable in the past of the battalion, because every major structural change affected the battalion's organization as well. Likewise, in 1996 the battalion was reorganized, and renamed to 88th Rapid Reaction Battalion. Four years later, in 2000 the unit evolved into a regiment, and continued its existence as the 1st Light Mixed Regiment. Again, four years later, in 2004 the unit was decreased slightly in strength, and was moved under the command of the 25th infantry brigade and renamed as 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion. During these reorganizations, the battalion remained in its former, separate barrack in the city of Szolnok, but in 2005 the unit had to move into the base of the 86th Szolnok Helicopter Base. Acknowledging the enduring achievements of the unit, the battalion received streamers to its standard three times: in 1994, and two times in 2005.

The Tasks of the Battalion

In the founding order the unit was tasked to be ready to conduct military actions in the state of war, in crisis management, occurring in any climate and geographical region of the world. As mentioned previously, the unit is primarily light infantry, but its organization and equipment allows the employment as an air assault battalion and it has dedicated airborne company as well.

The specified tasks of the battalion include:⁵⁷

1. Act as a rapid reaction force and conduct missions together with the air force or other units.
2. Conduct special operations, which cannot be accomplished by other conventional forces.
3. Participate in combat search and rescue missions.

The Combat Field Manual of the Light Mixed Battalion summarizes the anticipated employment of the battalion quite well:

The mission of the Light Mixed Battalion is to destroy the enemy and occupy its installations. The battalion is especially suitable to conduct operations in build up areas, mountainous areas, areas covered with dense vegetation; to conduct anti-armor ambush, conduct specific tasks of special operations and support the full spectrum of tasks of special operations.

The same manual summarizes the way the battalion achieve its objectives:

The light mixed battalion operates primarily in a big area of operation, often in the depth of the enemy, and conducts coordinated but decentralized attacks, reconnaissance and special operations, usually with company level and below, at night or during time of limited visibility. It achieves the destruction and disruption

⁵⁷Hungarian Ministry of Defense, Magyar Honvédség Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság [The Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces], <http://www.hm.gov.hu/rovat/7/hungarian-defence-forces> (accessed 22 November 2010).

of the enemy through coordinated fires and the maneuvers of small tactical units, rather than the use of massed force. . . . The unit is especially effective in restricted or severely restricted terrain (for mechanized units) and during time of limited visibility.⁵⁸

As a short summary the doctrine of the battalion⁵⁹ states, that the battalion possesses parts of the capabilities of an airborne, air assault and Ranger type unit--providing the necessary air assets--and it has the highest strategic mobility within the HDF.

As the spectrum of possible deployment areas widened, especially around 2004, the battalion was tasked to develop two additional capabilities. First, one company has to be able to act as a dedicated force protection company in crisis management operations. For this, the 2nd company of the battalion received BTR-80 APCs, which are considered as secondary or auxiliary equipment. The main profile of the company is still air assault.

The 3rd company was tasked to develop “limited” military police capabilities, primarily for employment during crisis management operations. For this, the company conducts extended training of riot control and police tasks, but it does not have the authority to investigate or conduct arrests or detention.

⁵⁸Hungarian Defense Forces, A Magyar Honvédség 25/88 Könnyű Vegyes Zászlóalj Harcshabályzata [Combat Field Manual of the HDF 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion], (Szolnok, 2005), 8.

⁵⁹Hungarian Defense Forces, A Könnyű Vegyes Zászlóalj Doktrínája [Doctrine of the Light Mixed Battalion] (Szolnok, 2005).

Lately the battalion was ordered to be ready to provide a company team for the development of the special operation capability of the HDF.⁶⁰ This primarily means to train together with the 34th BLSFB, but because of the word “development” is not clearly defined in this source, a possible common employment of the two battalions during a special operation is not obvious.

The battalion’s present is not easy: despite the warning mentioned in the end of chapter 3 of this essay, it seems to be the “Joker” of the HDF. The 25/88th is often misused to conduct missions that do not require any of its special skills. On many occasions during exercises it was visible that very few planners know what for or how to employ the battalion. This is the only one unit in the HDF with these skills and capabilities, and it seems that this kind of light infantry is fundamentally alien from the mechanized majority of the army.

The Organization of the Battalion

Compared to a conventional infantry battalion, the unit has special branches in the staff and subunits, which are specific to only independent units. The battalion staff has an S-7 section, which is responsible to planning and training. Staff elements and key positions of the assault command post are airborne qualified.⁶¹ The combat support subunits are the headquarters company and the combat support company. The combat

⁶⁰Hungarian Ministry of Defense, Magyar Honvédség Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság [The Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces], <http://www.hm.gov.hu/rovat/7/hungarian-defence-forces> (accessed 22 November 2010).

⁶¹Elements of the assault command post is determined by the battalion’s tactical SOP.

support company has four quite distinct platoons. The first is the reconnaissance platoon, which is long range reconnaissance by type. This platoon has a sniper squad which consists of three sniper teams. The platoon is airborne and scuba trained, and its primary mission is to conduct reconnaissance for the battalion.

The second platoon of the company is the engineer platoon. It has sapper, scuba diver and light water crossing squads. The uniqueness of the platoon is that the scuba squad specializes in underwater reconnaissance of crossing and fording sites, while the light water crossing squad is equipped with the KD-84 light boat kits, assault boats and inflatable Zodiac boats. With this, the battalion is capable to infiltrate two platoons at the same time through using water ways, and the battalion is able to conduct (unopposed) river crossings by its own.

The anti tank and the mortar platoon have assets which are air transportable, and the anti-tank missile complexes may be mounted to the UAZ 4x4 vehicles. These vehicles are air transportable (internally or externally) with the MI-8 helicopters. Dedicated members of the field medical platoon are airborne and scuba trained, which means that any subunit of the battalion, regardless of the method of the employment (insertion), may be augmented with combat medics.

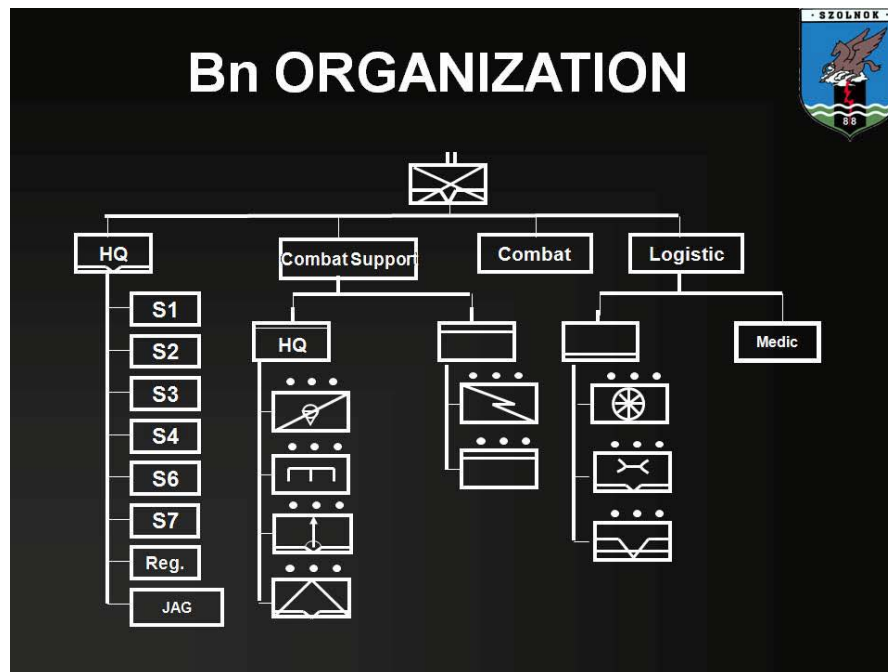


Figure 6. 25/88 LMB Organization

Source: 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion, “Introduction Presentation” (PowerPoint presentation. Szolnok 2010).

The battalion has three combat subunits. The basic--and traditional--air assault role is common to all, which means that each company conducts air assault related training, and each company has the same equipment.

There are slight differences, however, as is shown in the picture. The first company is a dedicated airborne company, which has certain amount of 4x4 vehicles also. The second company received the additional force protection task, (that is why it is depicted as mechanized in figure 7), while the third company has the elusive “limited military police” capability. As is depicted, each company has the same organization. They field UAZ 4x4 vehicles, while the second company retains BTR-80 and 80/A

armored personnel carriers, and the third company has a small fleet of Mercedes MB-250 4x4 vehicles.

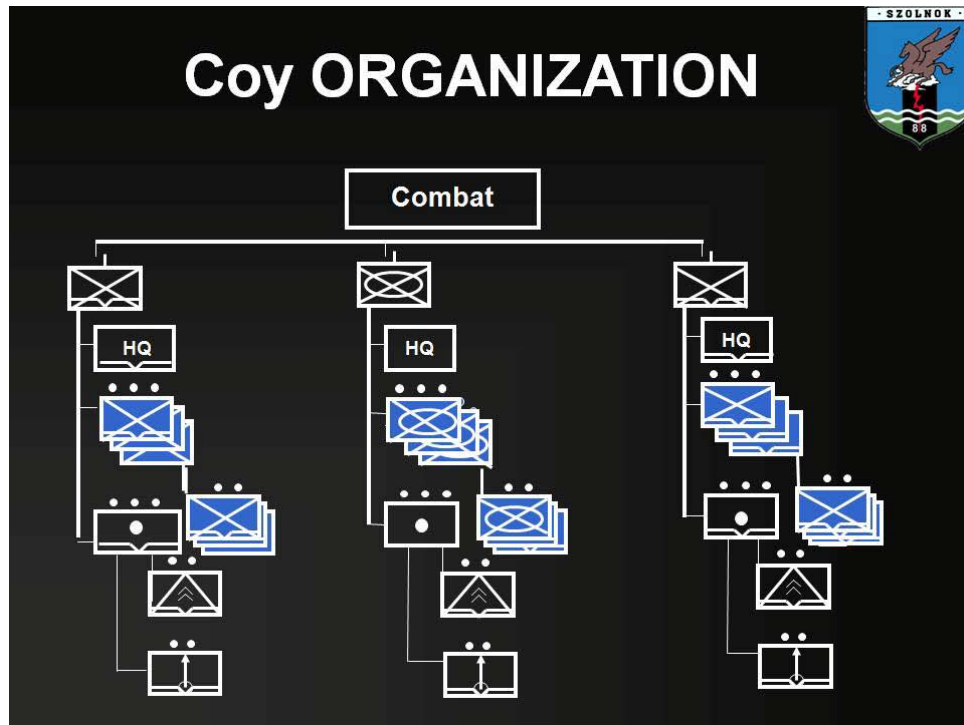


Figure 7. 25/88 LMB Combat Subunits

Source: 25/88th Light Mixed Battalion, “Introduction Presentation” (PowerPoint presentation, Szolnok, 2010).

The armament of the battalion is light and mainly air transportable by helicopters. The basic weapons are the same as the other (mechanized) infantry battalions. The sniper squad may be equipped with the GEPARD heavy sniper rifle, while the 9K115 (METIS) ATGM system and the KD-84 light boats are specific only to this battalion. It worth to note, that the battalion was responsible for the preparation and training of the mortar and anti-tank crews of the other infantry brigades and initially the 34th BLSFB.

Training and Selection

The unit conducts its training in accordance with the *Training program for the Rapid Reaction Soldiers and Subunits*.⁶² The program was issued in 1997, but its content covers almost every aspect of the activities of the 25/88th LMB. The volume successfully avoided the many changes and repeals of former manuals and handbooks of the HDF; hence today the 25/88th LMB has its respective, relatively good, unit specific training manual.

There is no official selection process for the battalion; the same general rules and requirements apply as throughout the HDF. The lack of selection can be traced back to two factors. The first one is that the battalion is not considered distinct enough to have specific entry criteria. The second one is that the empty positions would be filled even in a lesser degree than now. An unofficial--or rather natural--selection is working however. Definitely, the increased physical requirement the new soldiers face will act as a selection process to some extent, but surely not as effective as an institutionalized process.

The unit's true strength is still the accumulated experience of the soldiers. From the forming of the battalion it had contracted soldiers, and from 1996 the combat subunits consisted purely from contracted soldiers.⁶³ This was unique at that time, since the conscription in Hungary was ceased only in 2004. This resulted in the battalion having a

⁶²Hungarian Defense Forces, *Kiképzési Program a Gyorsreagálású Katonák és Alegységek Részére* [Training Program for the Rapid Reaction Soldiers and Subunits], (Budapest: Department of Land Forces, 1997).

⁶³Hungarian Ministry of Defense, *Magyar Honvédség Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság* [The Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces], <http://www.hm.gov.hu/rovat/7/hungarian-defence-forces> (accessed 22 November 2010).

quite remarkable and extended “old” soldier cadre, which over time transformed into a quite seasoned NCO cadre.

Compared to the training and selection possibilities of the 34th BLSFB, the battalion is in a disadvantageous situation: it is constantly engaged in missions abroad (see figure 1.), and often receives additional, sometime administrative tasks from higher command. Still, the unit put a great effort into a planned, methodical training. The battalion follows primarily a one year training cycle. Within this, the first event in the year is the winter survival training linked with the individual land navigation training.

The second major training event is the first of the two annual live fire exercises in one of the central training areas. During this, the unit trains up to squad level, and this is the time of the specialized basic training of the newly arrived mortar and anti-tank crews. The next events in spring consist of the annual mountaineer training, and the various training courses of the HDF (see later in this chapter). During the mountaineer training, the battalion conducts few days of basic mountaineer techniques followed by small unit tactics training in mountainous terrain.

During the summer period of the year, the unit usually conducts the waterborne operations training. This consists of practicing river crossings with the existing engineer assets, practicing infiltration with boats and rubber boats, employing rope bridges and insertion from air to water by helicopters. The engineer platoon and the reconnaissance platoon obviously practice their respective scuba and engineering tasks.

The autumn has three planned major training events. The first in line is the “Rohamlövész” special infantry course (see later in this chapter), and any other special course, the battalion has to participate. The second is the urban combat tactics training,

which is linked to regular and special light infantry tactics training. The third major training event is the platoon (and above) level live fire exercises, usually embedded into a company level tactical exercise.

Most of these events require deployment to one of the central training areas of the HDF, with the necessary logistics. The battalion tries to work in close cooperation with the 34th BLSFB, and obviously with the 86th SZHB, to the maximum extent.

Each subunit practices its primary insertion methods and infiltration techniques during these deployments, like air assault, parachute jumps, or vehicle movement. Apart from these planned training events, the battalion routinely and continuously conducts individual training throughout the year. This includes physical training, live fire exercises, land navigation, rappelling and various insertion methods and peace support operation techniques.

Depending on the number of the new recruits who arrive from the Basic Training Center, the battalion conducts usually two, eight week long Special Basic Trainings during which the new candidates learn the necessary basic knowledge about the battalion's specific techniques, tactics and procedures.

Next to these planned training, the battalion participates many "common to all," or centralized trainings. These range from the mandatory schools and courses of the NCOs to the airborne and scuba diver training of the three SOC battalions. Parallel to this, the unit has to support the training of the Peace Support Training Center, the 34th BLSFB, or its parent brigade, and the pre-deployment preparations for missions abroad (KFOR or ISAF) represent another high priority training events.

The Recent Missions

The battalion's past deployments are visible in figure 1, which probably does not require additional remarks about the high rate of deployment. There is an interesting fact worth highlighting, however. The battalion was the first unit which started the SFOR KRK (SFOR MSU- Multinational Special Unit, Bosnia) mission of the HDF, and developed the initial techniques and tactics, which are still in use.

Additionally the battalion provided the first infantry company to the Hungarian PRT in Afghanistan, took over the tasks from the Dutch Marines and developed the basic techniques again. Half of the first Hungarian OMLT (Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team, ISAF) was from the battalion (the other half was from the 34th BLSFB), again as an "entry force."

The 5/24th Bornemisza Gergely Reconnaissance Battalion

The History of the Battalion

The first predecessor of the unit was the 2nd Independent Infantry Battalion which was reorganized as a reconnaissance battalion and renamed the 1st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. The unit moved into various garrisons, and later in the same year it was renamed to 83rd Reconnaissance Battalion. Following further changes in the unit's location and garrison, in 1963 the unit occupied its barracks in the city of Eger and changed its name to 24th Reconnaissance Battalion. Its primary mission was quite constant; it was a purely reconnaissance battalion with troop reconnaissance (scout) and long range reconnaissance tasks and subunits. In 2007 the battalion had to move again to the city of Debrecen where it became a subordinate battalion of the 5th infantry brigade and was renamed to 5/24th Bornemissza Gergely Reconnaissance Battalion.

The Tasks of the Battalion

The primary role of the battalion is to provide reconnaissance capability to the national (HDF) or to coalition or allied forces. As the sole reconnaissance unit of the HDF, this unit should provide the reconnaissance support for the forces of the HDF and present the relevant information to the COM JFC regarding PIR. As a module reconnaissance element, the unit is able to provide an analyst workgroup, reconnaissance subunits, HUMINT teams and EW reconnaissance teams.

Organization

The battalion staff's organization is the same as the build-up of a regular subordinate battalion's staff. There are two exceptions, however. First, the battalion commander has two executive officers; one of them is the technical deputy, whose primary task is to oversee the electronic warfare related activities of the unit. The second specific element of the staff is the reconnaissance information analysis center, which is responsible for the initial processing of the gathered information.

The unit has two reconnaissance companies; a reconnaissance support company and an electronic warfare company. The reconnaissance companies are primarily scouts, equipped with APCs, but they have long range reconnaissance platoons as well.

Training and Selection

The recruits receive their comprehensive basic training in the dedicated training center of the HDF. The specialized training is the responsibility of the battalion, however. Especially after the relocation of the battalion in 2007 it was necessary that the large

number of new soldiers receive adequate training.⁶⁴ The training primarily consists of reconnaissance tactics and small unit tactics. The course for the officers is six weeks, while the new soldiers have to complete a twelve week course. After a successful exam, the candidates are considered deployable reconnaissance soldiers.

The specialized training includes the necessary additional skills like the various infiltration methods. The first of these is the parachutist training. After a short period of cancellation of this kind of capability, the unit received back its airborne reconnaissance platoons and conducted the basic parachutist training in 2008, with the help of the 34th battalion. The basic parachutist training is a three week long course and contains only static line parachute jumps.⁶⁵ The unit conducts scuba diver training together with the 88th battalion and the 34th battalion.⁶⁶

The Recent Deployments

The battalion's commitment in the international military activities of the HDF is significant. Between 1997 and 2005 the unit sent platoon size force to the Balkans (IFOR, SFOR, KFOR and MFOR).

⁶⁴László Szűcs, "Rotorszeles rajtaütés," *Honvedelem.hu*, 9 November 2007, <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/9225/hajduhadhaza.html> (accessed 7 July 2010).

⁶⁵László Szűcs, "Túl az első ugráson..." *Honvedelem.hu*, 24 July 2008, http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/12023/elso_ejtoernyos_ugras_pentek.html (accessed 7 July 2010).

⁶⁶MAJ József Hársfalvi, "25 kilométer úszás és taposás ólommal," *Honvedelem.hu*, 19 January 2010, http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/17988/bemerules_szolnok.html (accessed 7 July 2010).

In 2002, the unit provided part of the Independent Reconnaissance Platoon in Macedonia (FYROM), and in 2003 the unit deployed a company into Iraq as the security force of the Hungarian contingent. In 2004, it deployed another company into Afghanistan in a light infantry role. In 2006 the battalion deployed to Sarajevo.

Parallel to these missions, the battalion is responsible to deploy HUMINT teams into Afghanistan as part of the Hungarian PRT and into the Balkans as part of the Hungarian KFOR contingent.⁶⁷

The Peace Support Training Centre

The HDF founded the Peace Support Training Centre in 2000 as part of the 1st Light Mixed Regiment and became independent in 2004. The primary task of the PSTC is the training of Hungarian and international officers for UN peace support operations and management of IMOC (International Military Observer Course) courses. Since 2007, the PSTC is responsible for the organization and management of the special operations basic course.

Geographically, the PSTC is located in the same city as the 34th, the 25/88th and the 86th. Its base is a former military school building,⁶⁸ so the “academic” infrastructure is well developed. For tactical training and exercises, the training centre has to coordinate with the 86th Helicopter Base, and with the 34th and 25/88th to de-conflict training

⁶⁷Hungarian Ministry of Defense, Magyar Honvédség Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság [The Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces], <http://www.hm.gov.hu/rovat/7/hungarian-defence-forces> (accessed 22 November 2010).

⁶⁸The military infrastructures in Hungary are different from the US Army installations. The bases and barracks are smaller, and in many occasions they are located within a city. Military training areas are usually separated from the barracks.

events on the firing range or other training fields.⁶⁹ The centre does not have a dedicated OPFOR for training purposes, and because of the lack of adequate number of special trainers and administrative personnel,--as well as specialized weaponry and equipment--the major training events are held together with the 34th and the 25/88th battalions.⁷⁰

The International Special Forces Qualification Course - ISFQC

The first special forces qualification course was held in 2008 purely for Hungarian candidates; while the second one, which started on February 2010 is an international course. The current candidates are from Estonia, Slovakia and obviously from Hungary while the trainers are American and Hungarian instructors.⁷¹

The course consists of five phases. The first is the individual special training and it lasts 18 weeks. The next phase is the five week long basic tactics phase which is followed by the one month long general special operations training. The last phase is the two month long collective training. Those graduates who successfully negotiate the exams are considered to be a basic team leader, engineer, signal or weapon expert. The

⁶⁹MAJ Arnold Koltai, “Szolnokon készülnek a különleges műveletekre,” *Honvedelem.hu*, 22 February 2010, http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/18522/btkk_kulonleges_muveleti_alaptanfolyam.html (accessed 2 July 2010).

⁷⁰MAJ Arnold Koltai, “Aknavetővel lőttek a bravo-k,” http://hm.gov.hu/hirek/hazai_hirek/aknavetovel_lottek_a_bravok (accessed 5 June 2010); Arnold Koltai, Páncélt törték a fegyverspecialisták,” http://hm.gov.hu/hirek/hazai_hirek/pancelt_tortek_a_fegyverspecialistak (accessed 5 June 2010).

⁷¹László Szűcs, “NATO különleges műveleti alaptanfolyam Magyarországon először” [Special operations course opening ceremony], *Honvedelem.hu*, 2 February 2010, http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/18195/kulonleges_muveleti_alaptanfolyam_megnyito.html (accessed 2 July 2010).

language of the course is English, and the course standards were set in accordance with the relevant NATO standards.

The course has an obviously different curriculum for the various fields of expertise within the SOT (MEDIC training is not part of the curriculum). The course employs similar methods as the qualification course of the US Army Special Forces in Fort Bragg. The first group of candidates consists of the team commanders and deputy team commanders. Their primary focus is the tactical planning and the various leadership techniques, but obviously, they have to have certain knowledge about every other position within the team. The second group is the weapon specialists. They learn to use every infantry weapon within the HDF. The third group is the engineers, and the last group is the team signal specialist. The distinct groups train separately in their respective area, while during the small unit training and the tactical field exercises the teams are assembled to a fully operational SOT.

The course started with 36 candidates in 2010.⁷² This number may seem very small especially by ARSOF training standards, but one must not forget that the HDF is much smaller and has only one SF battalion.

The Special Operations Workgroup of the JFC

The purpose of the establishment of the special operation workgroup is to coordinate the efforts of various staff sections and units to maintain and develop the special operations capabilities of the HDF.

⁷²MAJ Arnold Koltai, “Szolnokon készülnek a különleges műveletekre,” *Honvedelem.hu*, 22 February 2010, http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/0/18522/btkk_kulonleges_muveleti_alaptanfolyam.html (accessed 2 July 2010).

The workgroup is independent within the structure of the JFC and is under direct subordination of the HDF JFC Land Force Commander. The chief of the workgroup is the JFC G3 chief. The coordinator within the workgroup is the section leader of the G3, special operations cell. Members of the group include all members of the special operations cell of G3 and one representative from every sections of the JFC staff. Additional members are representatives from the 34th BLSFB, the 86th Szolnok Helicopter Base, and HDF PSTC.⁷³

According to the order, the tasks of the workgroup form four major areas. The first is the NATO/ EU cooperation. Within this, the workgroup is responsible to organize the special operation training and integrate it into the NATO training system and prepare to participate in NATO/EU operations.

The second major task group is the personal affairs and human resource management tasks regarding the SO soldiers, which basically means the members of the 34th BLSFB. The workgroup is responsible to develop a suitable special operator career model which makes this part of the military attracting and keeps the trained soldiers in service.

The third task group is operational planning. Within this, the group has to develop a mid-term plan for the improvement of special operations capabilities and continuously coordinate special operations related tasks on operational level.

⁷³Well worth to note, that neither the 25/88th LMB, nor the 5/24th BGRB are represented in this workgroup. It is a remarkable mistake especially knowing that they are SOC and are tasked to support, and train with the 34th BLSFB.

The next task group is sustainment and logistics. The workgroup is the primary planning organization for logistical aspects of the deployment, employment and technical development of the SOF units.⁷⁴

The last group of tasks is about training. The workgroup is responsible for the development of doctrines, working on lessons learned topics, and the coordination of the activities of foreign and Hungarian mobile training teams (MTT) working on SO training.

“Rohamlövész” Special Infantry Course

Before the discussion of the “Rohamlövész” (RL) course, it is necessary to explain the course system of the HDF. There are many courses in the HDF which train special skills for the participants. The important ones from the aspect of this thesis are the tactical courses (from here on: courses). This system was introduced in 2003 when the Land Forces Command realized that there are areas in the training which are not very well managed and, more importantly, there are skills which are missing and the training of those skills is conducted through an ad hoc method. After an assessment the HDF introduced courses like the Urban Warfare Tactics, Light Infantry, Air Assault, Peacekeeper, Survival, Military Mountaineering and Special Infantry.

The initial success of the system diminished when the increased deployment rate of the troops, coupled with the emerging issues of the courses, resulted in a constantly decreasing number of applicants every year. The most pressing issue--or the root cause of the failure of the course system--was that the courses were not mandatory, and graduating

⁷⁴Because of the mentioned different terminology, it means mostly the equipment of the 34th BLSFB.

from a course does not grant any benefit, and it is not required for any position within the HDF. The 25/88th battalion, which was tasked to manage the majority of the courses, summarized the experiences gained during the years, and as a pressing issue highlighted that as long as the courses are not mandatory, the effectiveness of the course system is questionable.⁷⁵

This issue, parallel with the increased focus on deployment requirements instead of special training, resulted in whether or not that the present and future existence of the courses is a likely thing. Thus, keeping the RL course “alive” since 2004 (by which it is the most enduring course) is quite an achievement of the dedicated few who recognize its values.

Task and Purpose of the RL Course

The mission of the course is to enhance the combat skills and leadership capabilities of small unit leaders (team, squad, platoon), whose primary task in combat is the destruction of the enemy in direct engagement.⁷⁶

The purpose of the course is to enhance the tactical and leader skills of junior officers, NCOs and senior enlisted soldiers by executing squad and platoon level special and basic light infantry tasks. The course is primarily for members of the infantry branch, but it is open for every male soldier regardless of service or branch. The only limitation for the application is a minimum two years of service time in the HDF. It is most

⁷⁵Report from the Commander of the 25/88th LMB to the DCOM JFC, No. 208/66/2007, Subject: Issues and recommendations regarding the training system.

⁷⁶Information circular from the commander of the 25/88th LMB, No 299-2/2009, Subject: Pre-course briefing about the “Rohamlövész” special infantry course.

beneficial for officers in platoon leader and company executive officer positions, or for NCOs from team leader to platoon sergeant.

History of the RL Course

The first RL course started in 2004. It was planned and managed initially by individuals, who were trained in the US and realized the lack of a certain type of tactical knowledge especially in the small unit level. These individuals were eager to introduce new methods and gained the support of the Land Forces Command. The trainers of the first two courses were from the 34th BLSFB and the 25/88th LMB, and the trainees were NCOs from various units, but mostly from the 25/88th LMB.

Since 2005, the 25/88th battalion is responsible for running of the course. In 2008 the commander of the 25/88th LMB set as an objective for the companies of the battalion to delegate a certain number of candidates to the course. Unfortunately, the numerous other tasks of the units resulted a serious lack of potential trainees for a time, and none of these intentions were executed fully. Still, within the 34th and the 25/88th battalions the course is considered valuable; however, other units of the HDF are not so willing to send candidates to the course because of the above mentioned issues of the course system. For this, apart from personal will of gaining prestige, currently nobody can be forced to apply for the RL course.

Curriculum

The course consists of 33 consecutive training days without any break. From these, 26 days are considered high intensity training. The 33 days are divided around five major training areas or phases.⁷⁷

The first phase is the entry exam and land navigation assessment phase, and it consists of four days. All candidates have to accomplish a basic physical training (PT) test, swimming test and a 3 mile formation run in basic combat equipment. All applicants who successfully meet the standards begin the land navigation refreshment training and assessment. On the fourth day the candidates take the similar land navigation exam as in the US Army Ranger School. Those who pass the test start the squad phase.

This phase lasts for ten days. Its primary purpose is to practice the squad level battle drills as well as introduce the squad level orders and planning procedures. The primary method of training is conducting squad level patrolling. Next to the basic drills, the candidates practice various insertion methods (infiltration, air and vehicle insertion techniques). Each candidate is evaluated as either a squad leader or a team leader. Those who fail as a commander are dropped from the course.

Between the squad and the platoon phase, there is a three day long live fire training phase. During this phase, the candidates shoot with all of the basic weaponry of a regular light infantry squad. They conduct individual and collective live firing exercises with a night raid or ambush as the final event.

⁷⁷Information circular from the commander of the 25/88th LMB, No 299-2/2009. Subject: Pre-course briefing about the “Rohamlövész” special infantry course.

The next phase is the platoon phase, which lasts for 13 days with a three days long basic military mountaineer training. In this phase the candidates practice platoon level tactics. They learn basic mountaineer skills, the basic knots and hauling equipment, building fixed-rope lanes, rappelling and climbing. During this platoon phase the candidates have to accomplish platoon level raids and ambushes. They also practice infiltration on foot and insertion by rappelling from helicopters. The evaluation measures the trainees ability to lead a platoon size element in a graded position (platoon leader, platoon sergeant, squad leader), depending on the respective candidate's professional background.⁷⁸

The training program of the RL course is not extraordinary, and it does not contain highly complex or very "special" skills. The real challenge for the candidates is to operate under mental pressure and through physical hardships. The method of maintaining a stressful environment is similar as in the Ranger school: sleep and food deprivation, facing constant physically demanding tasks, and limited time and resources to achieve the set objectives.

Trainers and Trainees

Because the course is only relatively constant regarding its location, volume or administrative and fiscal support, the key to maintain a certain level of effectiveness and standard is a prepared and able instructor cadre. Initially the pool of possible instructors

⁷⁸The officers are mostly evaluated in the platoon leader position, while for example the junior NCOs are evaluated mostly in a squad leader position.

was very limited. These first instructors were hand-picked by the commanders of the course.⁷⁹

As years passed, the number of possible instructors grew. Just as almost any courses initially, the RL course was wandering around among the units of the HDF, depending on the decision of which unit was responsible for hosting the course. Since 2006, however, the 25/88th LMB was tasked to host the course every year, which made it possible to build up a relatively constant and more and more experienced instructor cadre from the soldiers of the battalion. Today the unit has a relatively big cadre of potential instructors, and basically the only unit of the HDF which is capable to delegate the necessary number of qualified instructors⁸⁰ alone without any help from other units.

Despite the fact that the 25/88th was just as heavily involved in deployments as any other units, it always put an effort to delegate the necessary amount of instructors and host the course by all means. According the introduction brief of the course,⁸¹ the various instructors have to have either certain US Army (like Ranger) or RL qualifications.

Unfortunately because the course is not institutionalized--not a school with permanent infrastructural framework--being an RL instructor is not officially

⁷⁹The first commander of the RL courses was MAJ Arnold Koltai, a CGSC and Ranger School graduate.

⁸⁰The required qualification is a self set standard of the 25/88th LMB. Still, occasionally the JFC has the aptitude to task other units with the hosting of the RL course who are definitely lack the necessary quality and quantity of instructors.

⁸¹MAJ Szabolcs Pécsvárady, “‘Rohamlövész’ Special Infantry Course Introduction Brief,” (PowerPoint presentation, Szolnok, 2007).

acknowledged or honored. Additionally, the instructors still have their original positions, and have to deconflict their other, permanent tasks for the period of the course.

The importance of the course is that it represents a possibility to able candidates to learn skills beyond the required skill set of the regular infantry. And next to the special operations basic course, it is the only such course in the HDF.

So, What Do We Have?

To summarize the chapter, one may conclude that the HDF has elements of special operation forces, but simply fails to properly acknowledge them. Those who mentioned this problem in their dissertations highlighted the importance to make the distinction between “special operations,” “special operations forces” and “special forces,” but their efforts are not very successful so far.

The 34th BLSFB is a definite winner of the recent changes: it has the resources, it receives additional support for its training, and probably it will be employed to tasks which it was designed for - tasks of a special forces unit. The battalion is the equivalent of an ARSOF SF battalion.

In the case of the 25/88th LMB, there is a clear identity crisis. The battalion was and is misused often, it wastes its resources to achieve additional, questionable and elusive tasks. It still has the skills which makes it similar to the Ranger battalions. It is light, versatile and has the mature and experienced commander cadre, which makes it an ideal SOF support infantry unit.

The 5/24th BGRB has no equivalent within ARSOF, but it is a unique formation, and probably occupied with additional tasks to the same extent as any other unit in the

HDF. Its long range reconnaissance capability, however, makes it a potential member of a SOF unit or community.

The PSTC as an organization does not belong to the SOF, but the ISFQC definitely integral part of the special operations trainings, while the “Rohamlövész” special infantry course is not really acknowledged, and it exists only because of the support and efforts of the 25/88th LMB. The course’s purpose and task is similar to the US Army Ranger School, and it should be a mandatory course for junior military leaders.

The Special Operations Workgroup of the JFC consists of numerous representatives of the JFC staff. Still, the only members who have SOF related knowledge or qualifications are the members of the SO cell of the G3. This means that the group may be effective for administrative tasks, but definitely may not represent a fully effective tactical command or planning organization.

So, the HDF has an SF unit, a SOF special infantry unit, long range reconnaissance unit, and a planning cell in the JFC. There is an institutionalized SF training, and a special infantry (leader) course. Keeping in mind the limitation at beginning of this chapter, one can say that pretty much everything exists which is necessary to field an effective SOF. Despite the fact that these units have to work very close cooperation with each other, and they truly rely on each other’s support, these assets and units fall under four different command (five, counting the air force) and the lowest level, where the chain of commands converge is the highest- the JFC. This makes the coordination process everything but fast and direct. So what should be done to preserve, enhance and focus these dispersed and rather perishable capabilities?

CHAPTER 5

METHOD OF ESTABLISHMENT

This chapter is based on the previous chapters and tries to answer the question: “How?” This chapter will show a possible method of the establishment of future HUNSOF. The primary consideration for this second part of this paper is to find a method which may be introduced and employed in the near future without significant investment.

Lines of Effort

An organized way to introduce a possible establishment method of the Hungarian special operation forces is to employ the primary guiding grouping of tasks and capabilities which is used during the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development Process. The distinct groups used throughout this process are doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities (as abbreviated commonly DOTMLPF).

The JCIDS analysis process defines capability gaps, capability needs and approaches to provide those capabilities. Knowing the complexity of military tasks and organizations, it does not take much time to realize that an obvious capability gap or problem in one group probably has roots in many others. Definitely, the scope of the paper is not broad enough to provide a full and truly detailed solution, but still the method is a good way to form a proposed solution.

The paper will limit its focus on the present possibilities of the Hungarian Defense Forces. It will not emphasize changes and investments which are certainly or

presumably beyond the existing resources of Hungary. This may result in the perception that the proposed capabilities or structure may seem somewhat limited compared to other countries' special operations capabilities. However, the key purpose of these limitations of the paper is to highlight the most pressing issues and show those necessary changes to initiate which have definitely positive effects in a relatively short time, by using those resources which are available.

To further simplify the problems, and because of the existing links between them, some of the areas will be examined together: doctrine, training and education; personnel, leadership and organization; and materiel and facilities.

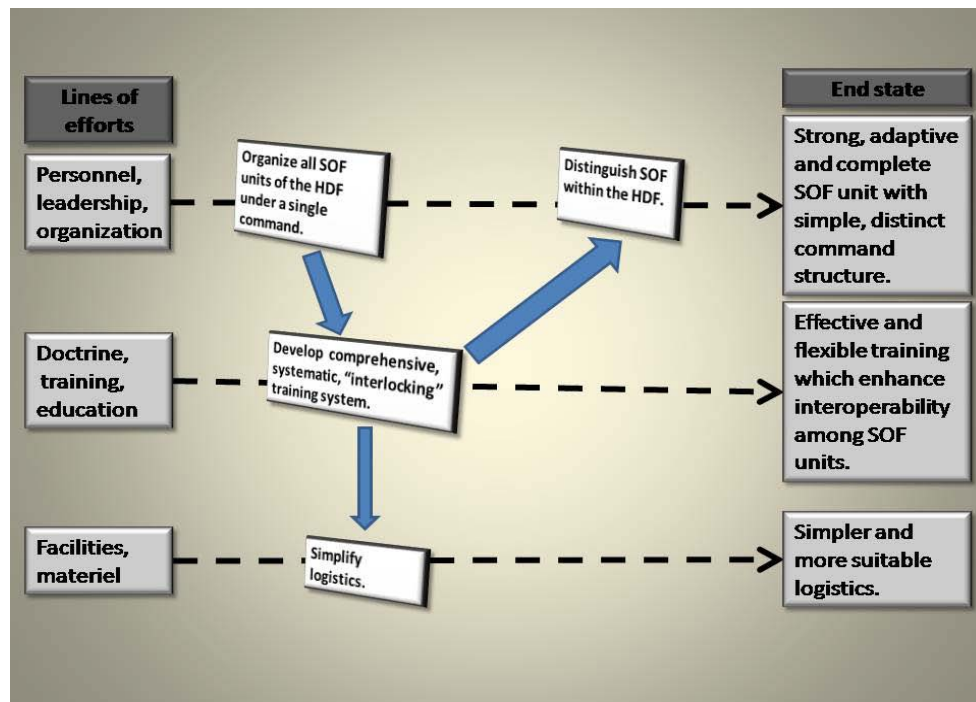


Figure 8. Possible lines of efforts

Source: Created by author.

Before the analysis of the current and desirable conditions and capabilities of the Hungarian SOF within a group, as a reference it is useful to shortly summarize the relevant characteristics of ARSOF, and identify key requirements, which HUNSOE should achieve.

JP 3-05, lists many considerations and recommendations which lead the observers to one conclusion: only a suitably tailored force should be tasked with the execution of special operations. The reason for that is based on the limitations of SOF.⁸² Improper employment of SOF could result in the depletion of forces, and SOF are not substitute for conventional forces. Supporting this, if one reads chapter 3 in the same publication, some of the considerations will further emphasize this belief. It states that commanders who exercise command over SOF should provide a clear and unambiguous command structure; furthermore they should endeavor to integrate SOF during the planning process. Further emphasizing the importance of command and control, the publication directly states that “Successful execution of SO requires clear, responsive C2 by an appropriate SOF C2 element.”⁸³

Next to the above mentioned requirements, a certain organization should be established. Accepting the fact that the current organization of United States ARSOF - where the SF and all the supporting units are under a distinct command--represents a suitable and effective organization, one may define a key requirement: all SOF units should be organized under a specific and distinct command.

⁸² Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publications 3-05, *Doctrine For Joint Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), II-3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, III-1.

The second requirement which is crucial is training. The facts and features, which characterize SOF training can be derived from a single chart from JP3-05.⁸⁴ According to the chart, there are four important “truths” related to SOF:

1. Humans are more important than hardware;
2. Competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies arise;
3. SOF cannot be mass produced;
4. Quality is better than quantity.

Three out of four are directly linked to training, while the question regarding the relationship of humans vs. hardware may also influence certain aspects of training. Another factor which--next to its influence to organizational structure--determines training as one of the limitations of SOF, namely, that SOF cannot be quickly replaced or reconstituted.⁸⁵ Derived from the complexity of SO and the SOTFs, it is obvious that permanent, well coordinated training within the SOF community is a fundamental requirement. But this is only one part of the equation. On the other side, SOF training has to be institutionalized (for “quality assurance”) and very flexible at the same time. After the initial build up phase of a new unit’s training, when a relatively large number of candidates have to be trained in the sustaining phase, trainers have to deal small number of trainees, while still maintaining the obtained skills. Furthermore, training and proper qualification should be the basis of the promotion system within SOF. Thus, the next

⁸⁴Ibid., II-4. Figure II-1.

⁸⁵Ibid., II-3.

capability is a distinct, comprehensive, systematic, multi-level training system together with routinely executed joint exercises and cross-training events.

The third requirement comes from a very simple statement: SOF is distinct from conventional forces.⁸⁶ This is a very short and distilled summary of many aspects of the training and employment of SOF units. To justify this statement, one may analyze some aspects of special operations. James D. Kiras defines special operations as:

“Unconventional actions against enemy vulnerabilities in a sustained campaign, undertaken by specially designated units, to enable conventional operations and/or resolve economically politico-military problems at the operational or strategic level that are difficult or impossible to accomplish with conventional forces alone.”⁸⁷

To execute special operations one needs specially selected men, special training and special organizations. To conduct unconventional actions requires the preliminary will to do something unaccepted, authority for the respective unit to do that, and the ability to accept the enhanced risk as a trade-off for the enhanced effect. This means that the successful training and employment of SOF requires different rights and licenses, which makes them necessarily distinct from the rest of the army.

The last capability of SOF to be examined here is the question of the proper equipment and facilities. This may be controversial to the “SOF truth,” which says that humans are more important than hardware, but certain special equipment or facilities are

⁸⁶Ibid., II-2.

⁸⁷Kiras, 5.

crucial for the training and employment of SOF. So the final examined capability is the existence of necessary materiel background.

Personnel, Leadership and Organization

The very first step of the changing process should be the establishment of at least a regimental level organization which consists of--initially--a staff, the 34th battalion and the 25/88th battalion. Obviously it is desirable to attach the 24th battalion, but this requires more significant changes and investments, which will be discussed later.

The identified capability gap, which can be eliminated via this establishment of a bigger unit, is primarily the lack of unified command. Today, in case of a simple training event--like when the three SOC battalions do their annual parachute refreshing training -, the various chains of command make the coordination cumbersome. Planning and executing an event like this involves coordination and (paper)work of four battalions, two brigades, an aviation base, and the JFC.

Similar overcomplicated cooperation becomes reality, when the PSTC conducts its courses (not just the SF course). To conduct certain field exercises, they need additional instructors, usually from the 34th and the 25/88th. When they need role players, vehicles, or special weapons and additional personnel, again usually the 25/88th battalion is tasked to provide the requested personnel and assets. And they have to coordinate with the 86th if helicopters are needed. This means direct coordination with three various battalions and the command levels up to the JFC. Clearly, a unified command would make training events occur much easier.

The current chains of commands carry the risk of misusing SO capability in case of a conventional armed conflict. The reason for that is that the 5/24th is the only unit

dedicated to conduct reconnaissance missions (next to the special reconnaissance capability of the 34th, and the limited reconnaissance capability of the 25/88th). This means unfortunately, that if the JFC keeps this unit under the command of the 5th brigade, it risks limiting the reconnaissance capability of the HDF as a whole.

The 25/88th is in a very similar situation. Because it is definitely not mechanized, it is unlikely that the unit is able to keep up with the tactical mobility of the other battalions of the 25th brigade. However, this battalion represents the only airborne and trained air assault capability of the JFC which should be kept under direct command higher than a brigade. The unit's capabilities cannot be fully utilized within the organization of a mechanized brigade.

There are several examples in the past of misusing SOF, especially from the mid-1960s, with the surge of conventional troops. During Vietnam the emphasis of the employment of SOF shifted from unconventional warfare to regular, and in many occasions they were employed as infantry.⁸⁸ Examples of the improper use of SOF can be found even in the Second World War. When SOF did not conduct special operations they were tasked to conduct more common, conventional tasks, such as being a flank or rear guard of a conventional unit. Sometimes they received additional heavy weapons to be more effective, but this still did not match their true value and expertise.⁸⁹

⁸⁸Marquis, 17.

⁸⁹Tucker and Lamb, 79.

Beside the risk of misusing SOF and wasting their capabilities, according to James D. Kiras, the real utility of special operations is their strategic impact.⁹⁰ So, the employment of SOF units (like the 25/88th or the 5/24th) should be considered on a higher level than brigade.

A dispersed SOF reveals further negative effects. Without a more complex SOF unit, the group of staff officers who understand SO comprehensively is quite small. Each battalions' staffs concentrate on their own segment of SO and without extensive common training they are not able to gain insight about other aspects and areas of SO. Experts may exist outside in the SOF community (in the National Defense University, for example) but they probably lack the necessary practical staff experience of working in a SOF command staff.

Not lastly there is one more currently missing capability on this line of effort, which may be eliminated by forming a larger SOF unit. This is the ability of establish a valid career model for SOF soldiers. It is obvious that because of the small size of the HDF, the possibility to build a wide and permeable career path is also small. It is even smaller in cases of soldiers serving in the respective SOF units. This means that the career path (or ladder) system easily becomes congested. With the formation of a bigger SOF unit, the accessibility between the subordinate battalions would be greatly enhanced. Introducing a new level of command within the--so far not existing--SOF chain of command gives the possibility to staff officers to know all aspects of the special operations, not only their relevant battalions SO tasks. Furthermore, serving in the

⁹⁰Kiras, 7.

regiment staff will generate able planners and staff officers who are able to effectively work on special operations within the JFC.

This step--forming a SOF unit from the already existing elements--is nothing else than establishing another modular force, but permanently. And the modularity concept is present in the HDF. This may be the strongest argument of the opponents of this idea. The ambiguity of the future tasks, the complexity of the operational environment makes it likely that the units which are tailored in peace to fight full scale, major combat operations, are not suitable to counter the challenges of stability operations. One may argue the aforementioned is the reason why it is not necessary to establish bigger, more complex units at home permanently. One must not forget, however, that in most cases units have more or less sufficient time before deployment to forge strong cohesion, and develop necessary SOPs and methods. However, the characteristics of the employment of SOF are slightly different. First of all, they work in small groups, most of the time away from the support of their own troops. Their missions are high risk, short time--high intensity like DA, or prolonged and very complex like FID. And usually they don't have the time for a prolonged preparation phase. This makes it necessary that the basic methods should be developed "back home," under a common organizational and training structure.

A clear example regarding disastrous outcome of employing an unprepared and ad hoc unit for a special operation is Operation Eagle Claw.⁹¹ The responsible American military and political leadership drew important conclusions from the disaster. General

⁹¹A good description is available in Susan Marquis' book,

Carl Stiner, commander in chief of USSOCOM (U.S. Special Operations Command) identified many problems. Among them the most important was the lack of clear command relationship, the ad hoc nature of the task force, inadequate equipment and lack of dedicated joint forces.⁹² The Holloway Commission which acted as the Special Operations Review Group, concluded its investigation and found that poor command and control, poor coordination and inadequate comprehensive training of the task force were all primary factors of the disastrous outcome of the operation.⁹³ They recommended the establishment of a Counterterrorist Joint Task Force.

Initiating this first step in the proposed line of effort will raise additional opposition within the HDF which may further hinder the efforts of establishing a SOF regiment. The brigades will oppose this step because the SOF battalions represent combat and capability multipliers. Their personnel strength increases the brigades', and their equipment also enhances the brigades' capabilities if it is necessary. And the 34th BLSFB might see this transformation as the loss of its independence. Observing the numbers of their common deployments and activities with the 25/88th, this is only a perception. In reality their present independence is overshadowed by the necessary interdependence with the other SOF units.⁹⁴

Summarizing this initial step of the establishment of the HUNSOF, one may see its benefits. First it greatly enhances the capabilities of the already existing SOF units by

⁹²Marquis, 72.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴The 34th and the 25/88th sent common contingents three times into Afghanistan.

simplifying the coordination and the command structure. Moreover it generates a level of command which is able to influence special operations related key decisions while effectively representing the professional interests of a comprehensive SOF. The leadership of the proposed SOF unit would (and should) form the nucleus in the future of the JFC or higher level SOF commanding officer cadre.

This step is necessary: the current “limited resource” environment makes it a key “enabler” to initiate more effective and coordinated training. Finally, because two of the planned three units are already garrisoned in the same location, it will not require serious investment: all required infrastructure already exists (see later in this chapter). Based on this, comparing the gains and costs, it is a completely affordable and executable step which requires only will and determination.⁹⁵

Doctrine, Training and Education

There are several hindering factors existing today, which prevent truly effective training. These problems are common throughout the HDF, not just in the SOF units.

Some of these problems were identified by the command of the 25/88th battalion. In their report No. 208/66/2007 to the DCOM JFC, among others, they identified the following issues:

1. The present (voluntary) deployment system seriously hinders training;
2. There are no updated manuals, and the existing ones are irrelevant;

⁹⁵On 16 June 2010, the 37th II. Rákóczi Ferenc Engineer Battalion and the 1st Honvéd EOD and Warship Battalion were transformed into regiments with a minor structural change. www.honvedelem.hu/cikk/3/20517/uj_ezredek_muszakiak_tuzszereszek.html (accessed on 20 June 2010).

3. The far too complex and restrictive legal regulations do not support real, life-like training;

4. There is no comprehensive personal (training) evaluation system;

5. There is nothing which require or acknowledge better performance of the soldiers;

They recommended the revision of evaluation system, and to develop exact requirements and qualifications for certain positions. The report was filed in 2007.

To prove that many of these problems are common within the HDF today, a recent writing outlines some of the same challenges. In an article⁹⁶ the chief of training section of the 5th brigade highlights the same problems: negative effects of the current deployment system, the legal regulations and the inadequate doctrinal background.

Even despite the fact that the 34th battalion has a seemingly well organized and comprehensive training system (see Chapter 4), based on his research on the training and development possibilities of the 34th BLSB LTC Forray states that there is no well defined long term training and selection concept.⁹⁷

The problems were acknowledged by the JFC, and as an answer, in a later issue of the same periodical, the JFC introduced the concept of the modernization of the training.⁹⁸ The modernization workgroups assembled, and started their work in 2009.

⁹⁶LTC Péter Lippai, "Drills From The Point Of View Of The Subunits," *Seregszemle* [Army Review] no. 12 (2008).

⁹⁷Forray, 136.

⁹⁸COL János Huszár, LTC Lajos Peszt, "Training Modernization," *Seregszemle* [Army Review] no. 3 (2009).

The aim of this part of the chapter is not to provide a hundred percent solution for these problems, or to show a detailed training plan, but just to highlight some SOF training related issues, actions, and possible consequences.

Apart from the above mentioned ones, SOF units face other issues regarding their training and doctrine. Despite the fact that both, the 34th and the 25/88th battalions, have their distinct manuals and “doctrines,” they are not aligned, and there is no distinct SO manual existing today in regards to comprehensive special operations capability of the HDF.

When the distinct units conduct the same special training separately--because of their different training schedule, basically they double their respective efforts, ergo wasting precious resources.

Because of their distinctness, after the basic training each unit further trains their newly recruited soldiers. However, because of the small numbers (remember, we are talking about battalions, which means the new recruits arrive sporadically and in small numbers) these training events require uneconomically larger efforts and committed assets in the case of separate battalions.

Speaking of the selection, there is no official institutionalized selection process in the cases of the 25/88th and the 24th battalions. This certainly degrades the overall quality of the subunits and requires additional assets and resources committed to training. While the 34th battalion has a selection process, most of the applicants of the unit come from either directly from a military school or from civilian life without any military background. And whereas one of the key characteristic of SF soldiers should be maturity and experience, recruiting from the “street” hardly enables this desirable feature.

The next step in the proposed “lines of operations” is the development of comprehensive SOF manuals, and the unit (regiment) level coordination of training. This may be done by the proposed new unit: the SOF regiment, and this should be done by those who currently have the greatest experience regarding SOF: again members of the SOF regiment.

To justify this statement, one has to think about the enhanced capabilities of a bigger, distinct SOF unit. The resources and personnel shared between the two (three, counting the 24th) battalions means more economic and standardized training throughout the SOF community. Parallel to this, a centralized training plan may enable a training “ladder,” a stage-by-stage skill development system which further enhances the interoperability and accessibility between the subunits.

Coordinating the training requirements of a bigger SOF unit may ensure the future of the ISFQC. Definitely, the need for the course will decrease after the full operational capability of the 34th BLSFB, when there will be only a handful of Hungarian candidates per year and the number of international students may change also. Making the course available for the able soldiers from the other two SOF battalions provides more economic training, and the trained soldiers may serve as a ready, trained pool to fill the empty positions of the 34th BLSFB in the future.

The “Rohamlövész” special infantry course should be initially mandatory for certain leaders of the 25/88th LMB. Preferably it should be mandatory for all soldiers of the battalion, but knowing the problems of recruitment, this would result in a serious drop of the personnel strength of the battalion. Still, using it as a selection process of leaders would ensure the competency of the junior commanders.

The common and at least partly centralized training has several advantages. First, it is a form of cross-training, which makes the future internal migration of trained personnel between the battalions easier. Second advantage is that, because of the common foundations, a temporary augmentation from other SOF units in a deployment (which already happened as it is seen in case of the OMLT and PRT missions) does not require excessive pre-deployment training. Third, common training is a key enabler for the development of the special operations doctrines. Without any significant real life experience, useful techniques, tactics and procedures may come only from excessive training. These documents may be developed only by those who actually do the training.

To summarize this step, one may conclude that a comprehensive, tactical special operation capability may not be developed without an overarching professional guidance of a competent command. The HDF should focus its relevant resources and efforts which are currently spread throughout the separate SOF/SOC battalions, and the new SOF unit has to be tasked to develop integrated, complete SO training which will benefit all SO units. This, however, may not be achieved without decent legal support.

Back to the First Line of Effort

As was mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, legal restrictions seriously hinder many aspects of effective training, even the most basic ones. The reason for this is that most of the relevant rules and laws are old, as many of them were developed for a conscripted army and are not suitable for the current, different military environment. During his research (in 2009) LTC Forray found several legal issues regarding the

employment of the 34th BLSFB, where the legal background was inadequate or nonexistent.⁹⁹

The voluntary deployment system makes the deployment of full units impossible. The ridiculously strict medical examination system which is required for certain positions¹⁰⁰ makes selection based on health (or luck) rather than personal capabilities.

Surely, to revise and to change the majority of the regulations of the HDF is difficult and time consuming, but SOF should be “special” and able to operate in an unconventional way, the sooner the better. The solution for that is to make SOF legally distinct; there should be a separate military skill identifiers for members of the SOF. To show the benefits of this step, let’s see some of the problems which can be resolved using this idea.

Just as the HDF as a whole, SOF within the army is voluntary as well. And this means that they accept the increased risks, increased requirements and other restraints which comes with SO. In this way, the voluntary deployment system may be (and should be) eliminated in case of SOF. While making deployment mandatory throughout the whole army requires a serious political decision, designating the small group of volunteer

⁹⁹Forray, 136.

¹⁰⁰Currently the airborne qualified positions (most of the SOF units’ positions) can be filled by personnel, who medically accepted (16/1998. (X. 28.) *HM—EüM együttes rendelet. Common directive of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Health about the license requirements of professional aircrews*). However, they have to renew the medical qualification every year, and the paratroopers’ medical standards are just as high as the fighter pilots’. While in the past conscription provided the necessary number of recruits, today the small number of able recruits is further limited by this unnecessary strict examination.

SOF community as constantly deployable without personal consent certainly makes for a smaller political footprint.

Personnel movement within and outside the SOF unit may be better controlled. Today, because of the lack of distinct requirements or preliminary requirements, anyone may join SOF units, which may result in incompetent or incapable personnel in key positions.¹⁰¹ Establishing SOF as a distinct “skill identifier” definitely does not--and should not--prevent inter-service or branch movement of personnel, but setting certain qualification requirements definitely helps maintain the “quality over quantity” truth.

Another benefit of this step is the not insignificant morale effect. Obvious distinction makes SOF members proud of their profession, which if not truly a substitute for monetary compensation for the higher requirements SOF have to face, but definitely help keep the costly trained soldiers available for longer.

This step may eliminate the risk that comes from the appearing skepticism and prejudice of the rest of the army, which may easily become anti-elitism. It is not a HDF specific phenomenon; many armies have this tendency.¹⁰² It represents an annoying, sometimes moral degrading atmosphere, but only as long as it does not come from responsible decision makers -from their part it may pose a serious threat to special operation capabilities. Officially acknowledging SOF justifies their distinct nature and helps establish a healthy and unambiguous control from the higher levels of command.

¹⁰¹As it was identified and reported by the 25/88th battalion. Report from the Commander of the 25/88th LMB to the DCOM JFC. No. 208/66/2007.

¹⁰²Even ARSOF had to fight for its existence in the past, as it is visible from the comments of high ranking officials and military commanders. Marquis 1997, 73.

Finally, a distinct SOF category within the army justifies the necessary enhanced compensation method of SOF soldiers without raising complaints or debates within the rest of the regular army.

There are several questions and considerations about this step, however. The first one is that because of its legal feature, just as almost any legal reform or modification, it takes a significant amount of time. Hence it is questionable, why is it not the first step in the proposed lines of efforts. The reason is the same as it was in case of the training. Simply that there is not enough experience within the HDF about the newly acquired special operation capability, which is absolutely necessary as a foundation for significant changes. Parallel to this, establishing SOF as a distinct category requires very well defined and well articulated necessary specifications and definitions. For this, because of the majority of SOF “experts” are in the dispersed SOF units right now, their planning and recommendations are crucial. This is the reason that the legal aspects of SOF may not be fully changed before a complete SOF unit is established, and through the development of doctrine and comprehensive training and planning, they gather valuable and valid experience. This, however, does not--and must not--prevent the decision makers to implement temporary changes or grant experimental licenses for the SOF unit immediately in the beginning of the SOF founding process.

The necessary compensation also represents a truly existing legal issue. One may not require extra efforts without proportional and adequate compensation. As the army struggles with a lack of manpower, as long as being a SOF soldier does not mean distinction (preferably official acknowledgment) and clear and present financial benefit, SOF may not fill empty positions with the most suitable candidates. This means that the

HDF have to plan adequate monetary resources for maintaining SOF if it wants to have a permanent, true value behind the numbers of SOF positions, not just statistics. And this last consideration leads the readers for the last proposed step of the lines of effort: the question of cost.

Facilities and Materiel

Cost is a sensitive area and a pressing issue. The lack of proper equipment and the limited budget is a common problem throughout the whole Hungarian army.

The 34th BLSFB has relatively new mission essential equipment which was provided by the US government. The rest of the SOF units, however, do not have new equipment. Finding solutions for the urgent need to rearm or upgrade the equipment of the HDF is definitely worth a separate paper far beyond the scope of this paper. The author, nor the essay, is able to propose feasible financial actions to reallocate sufficient funds for SOF.

More important is to identify those existing assets and material resources which make the transformation process possible at least in the beginning. First, the necessary infrastructure for a bigger unit already exists. As was mentioned before, the 34th and the 25/88th battalions are located in the same military installation, a mere hundred yards from each other. Each unit has its respective infrastructure in the form of office space, barracks, warehouses and motor pools. There is no need for excessive infrastructural development for the regimental staff, even the battalion staffs could maintain their current strength. The base harbored the Air Force Officers' Training College in the past, a much greater organization, which means that there is still available space for a regimental (or even larger) staff. The possible relocation of the 5/24th battalion, however, requires

infrastructural investment, so their geographical integration into a SOF unit is not possible immediately.

The base itself has a firing range, killing house, swimming pool, sport complex and a military airfield, obviously with the helicopters of the 86th. Furthermore there are natural waterways to practice waterborne operations and scuba diving. The PSTC is also located in the city, and a battalion level training ground and firing range is only 50 miles away. This means that currently the base and the city of Szolnok provides an excellent training infrastructure for a SOF unit.

The sustainment companies of the relevant battalions also exist; each unit is able to sustain itself for a limited time. What makes sustainment more complicated is that presently each battalion (the 34th and the 25/88th) has to deal with the 86th Szolnok Helicopter Base sustainment battalion, because the units are logistically dependent from the “base owner” unit. From some aspect they are not, which means that the 34th battalion has to engage the JFC directly, while the 25/88th has to engage the 25th brigade regarding certain logistical issues. Similarly, the 5/24th is completely subordinate to the 5th brigade, which means that they are responsible for the battalion’s sustainment. This everything-but-simple relationship would be eliminated with the establishment of a SOF unit, because there would be only one staff “on site” which would coordinate the sustainment of the battalions.

Finally, the current organizational structure does not require costly changes or an increase in manpower initially. The organizations of the SOF battalions are quite well suited for their expected tactical tasks, and because of their independent status they generally have stronger staffs than regular subordinate battalions. This means that an

initial establishment of a regimental staff may be conducted by the initial reallocation of battalion staff positions. Of course, additional staff positions may be necessary later, but initially there is no need to significantly increase the numbers of soldiers.

To summarize the logistical needs, everything exists, that is necessary to merge the 34th and the 25/88th battalions under a single regimental command, and only limited infrastructural development is needed for the future geographical integration of the 5/24th battalion or the relevant sections of the PSTC.

CHAPTER 6.

CONCLUSION

As the paper contains a short conclusion at the end of every chapter, the final conclusion may be a short summary of the findings of the research.

The observed facts are:

1. Hungary started to develop its special operations capability.
2. There is a doctrinal misunderstanding of definitions, which makes the development process somewhat misleading.
3. Hungary identified and defined SOF tasks based on her EU and NATO membership.
4. Hungary has similar units as are in ARSOF, with the exception of aviation and PSYOP units. The HDF has necessary courses and schools which may provide training.
5. There is not a distinct command for these units, nor is a command organization which has *comprehensive experience* regarding the planning and commanding of SO.
5. The SO capability development process of the HDF is not finished yet.
6. Current trends in the HDF carry the risk of losing trained personnel, ergo existing capabilities and precious experiences.

Based on these facts, one may answer the secondary research questions of the paper:

1. How can SOF use its unique capabilities to support HDF's fundamental missions and expected future commitments abroad? First, there are tasks derived from the country's EU and NATO membership. Second, the country identified the same threats in the NMS as many other countries. According to current military experience some of these

threats may be countered by the employment of SOF. This means, that SOF is a necessity if Hungary wants to be able to answer these threats.

2. What existing units may form the basis for HUNSOF? The HDF already possess very similar units as ARSOF does. These units, however, are not considered members of the special operations forces, their current chain of command is complicated and presently nothing (legal or moral acknowledgement) supports their distinctiveness which makes ARSOF a “special” and useful asset. Thus, the more focused reorganization of HUNSOF units is necessary.

3. How should this process begin and what is needed to be done initially to establish SOF? A general agenda in Chapter 5 showed how should the HDF initiate (or continue) the development of HUNSOF. The key is to realize that while currently present problems may be solved by these steps, the necessary cost of this process is not significant. Thus, it only depends on the determination of respective decision-makers.

The primary question this research tries to answer is whether Hungary should put more effort into the development of the HDFs special operations forces?

Based on the aforementioned answers, the findings of subject matter experts in their researches (that the current organization of HUNSOF contains significant faults) and the statement of the NMS regarding development of capabilities (it should be based on the most likely operations, and the HDF has to prepare for mission accomplishment on the highest level), the answer is a clear and definite YES.

Since the development process required significant amount of resources so far, finishing it without reaching an effective result makes no sense, and only means wasted efforts.

The significance of this research is that it provides a comprehensive examination of the present conditions of the HUNSOF and the future expectations and predicted trends which may make it necessary to establish a more robust and distinct SOF within the HDF. The intent of this topic and the research question is to be a trigger for further debates within the relevant Hungarian military decision makers, or--more preferably--it may initiate a necessary changing process which may help to employ the capabilities of the existing forces more effectively.

GLOSSARY

HDF: Hungarian Defense Forces (Magyar Honvédség) is the official name of the armed forces of Hungary.

HUNSO: Hungarian Special Operation Forces. This definition officially does not exist. More accurately, currently in the Hungarian military terminology “special operations force” means solely (and wrongly) the 34th BLSFB. In the context of this paper HUNSO consist of those SOC units of the HDF which are designed, trained and equipped to conduct special operations and missions, and which have a separate, distinct chain of command directly under the JFC. Additional, currently not existing criteria are the distinct selection method, distinct skill identifiers, additional rights and licenses regarding the training, employment and deployment of these units.

JFC: Joint Forces Command (Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság). This command has the overall authority over the army and air force units of the Hungarian Defense Forces, excluding those military institutions which are under the direct command of the Chief of Defense Staff.

SO: Special Operations (JP 1-02) - Operations conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic, or psychological objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. These operations are conducted during peacetime competition, conflict, and war, independently or in coordination with operations of conventional, nonspecial operations forces. Political-military considerations frequently shape special operations, requiring clandestine, covert, or low visibility techniques and over-sight at the national level. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.

SOC: Special Operation Capable. In this essay, those units of the HDF which are designed, trained and equipped to conduct special operations and missions. Currently there are three units in the HDF which have the organization and training structure which makes them SOC (keeping in mind the limitations, that the essay will not consider the Hungarian PSYOP and aviation assets as part of HUNSO): the 24th BGRB, the 34th BLSFB and the 25/88th LMB (they are introduced in Chapter 4)

SOF: Special Operations Forces. (JP 1-02) - Those active and reserve component forces of the (US) military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations.

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